

The Inquirer.

A Religious, Political, and Literary Newspaper, and Record of Reberent Free Thought.

ESTABLISHED IN 1842.]

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[ONE PENNY.

The Inquirer.

ESTABLISHED 1842.

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TOPICS AND EVENTS.

THE CONFERENCE.

THE Report of the proceedings at Sheffield, which is presented with this week's INQUIRER, and which, despite its size, could not suffice for all the many interesting and inspiring utterances of the week, will furnish those who were absent with much to think about. It will be seen from the pages of our regular issue, there has not only been an overflow into its columns, but many minds have already responded to the stimulus of the occasion, and we have no doubt that we shall have some useful discussion as a result. In this place we wish only to make three or four notes. First, we must rejoice in the success of the meeting, a success partly to be gathered from the fact of the numerous attendances, but much more from the tone that almost uniformly prevailed. We hope—almost against hope—that people will begin to leave off the tiresome criticism that we, as a people, lack emotion and fervour. It comes very frequently from those who mingle least with us, and who mistake their aloofness from us for our coldness towards them. A word of hearty thanks is due to the General Committee, the Secretaries and the President. And we must very cordially congratulate the workers and planners at Sheffield, by whose spirit and industry things were carried through with such admirable evenness and satisfaction. In the next place, we join with Dr. Herford in acknowledging

the evident interest shown, and the good services rendered, by our Sheffield contemporaries in allotting so much space to the reports of the meetings, and leaders upon them, and especially in their graphic 'notes.' While the journalists thus find out that there is 'copy' in our meetings, we may be sure the readers of newspapers have been studied by them; perhaps the recent Evangelical Free Church Council has whetted the public appetite for news of these Unitarians and their ways of thinking and working. If there was a weak spot in the week's proceedings, it was in regard to the discussions, which seemed to us at times below the importance of the occasion and the theme. Thursday afternoon's meeting was a brilliant exception, perhaps because there was no reading of papers to institute comparisons. We venture also to return to a pet recommendation of ours, founded upon the example of friends in America. Why not have a timekeeper by the chairman's side, whose one duty it should be promptly to ring down readers and speakers who transgress the limits assigned? Several of the papers were much longer than they need have been, and their effect would probably have been enhanced by shortening. And could not a little more than five minutes be allowed to approved speakers in the discussions? Of course these are small matters, and whatever our opinion on them, there can only be one opinion as to the high character and usefulness of the Conference as a whole.

CRETE AND THESSALY.

THE first claim made on behalf of the Concert of Europe is that it is a peace-keeper. The first item in the indictment of that union (as it has been put) of 'Three Despots, Two Vassals, and a Coward,' must be that, while in Crete it has conspicuously failed to maintain even a semblance of public order, both in the unhappy island and on the mainland its decrees have had so provocative an effect that we are now, after the waste of hundreds of lives, on the verge of the very calamity it was designed to avert. We hope that, in the excitement of the crisis in Thessaly, the situation in Crete will not be allowed to fall out of prominence. Mr. Balfour and his colleagues still echo that magic word Autonomy; but what value is to be attached to the political schemes of a junta which cannot do common police duty, cannot put down pillage and murder in the towns it occupies, of Chancellors who have not yet grasped the elementary fact that the Turkish troops must be withdrawn before any other step is of the smallest service? If it be true, as is now stated, that the British Government is weakening on this latter question, the future of the island is indeed dark. The present

Concert will fail, because it has steadily refused to face facts distasteful to its autocratic leaders. The impossibility of the Turks, the Cretan trust in Greece and Greece only, the honest and utter determination of the Greeks—these are elementary facts which the Powers have all along refused to face; and, as a consequence, Easter-tide is to be defaced by a bloody struggle, in which whole peoples may be wiped out. The Greeks are not saints, nor the Cretans angels; but they have put to shame principalities and Powers, and securely won the sympathy of all lovers of freedom and progress.

THE EDUCATION RESOLUTION.

ABSOLUTE unanimity was hardly to be expected, but we hope that the very large majority by which the Education resolution was carried at Sheffield will commend it for the general acceptance of the constituents of the Conference, and that the occasion will thus prove the point of the new departure which many pioneers in this important field have long desired and sought for. The two Education Bills of this year mark the climax at once of the clerical reaction and of the disappointment among friends of education pure and undefiled with the policy of compromise. If the educationalists of twenty-five years ago had had any idea of what its history would be, we believe that policy would never have been adopted, or, if it had been accepted at all, it would have been only as a quite temporary and provisional measure. Ever since then we have had to stand on the defensive; to-day we are helpless before a scandal gross enough to stir the bones of Dr. Crosskey and George Dawson. And it must be remembered (members of school boards and other workers in the routine of elementary teaching are not allowed to forget it) that this great injustice which is blazoned forth in Acts of Parliament and Orders in Council covers thousands of petty injustices, annoyances, and disabilities which never get to the ears of the general public. The case of Miss Gold was a revelation to most people; we hope that it and other object lessons have not been given in vain. The fact is that the clericals never have been and never can be really loyal to the compromise. Mr. Street, who knows what he is talking about, goes so far as to say that the conscience clause is 'utterly and necessarily inoperative.' Professor Carpenter seems to think that the teachers are very anxious to retain this most difficult duty of giving what passes for religious instruction. If Professor Carpenter would interview a hundred Board school teachers we think he would find that at least three-quarters of them would admit their complete incompetence to give such lessons, and most of these would wish to be relieved of the task—some of them from positive distaste,

some with a bitter recollection of what religious instruction had meant in their own career, some moved by fear lest their heterodoxy should become known, and so on. Of the remaining twenty-five, there would perhaps be ten passably good religious instructors, ten bigots whose wish to 'instruct' should be restrained, not excited, and five who would answer to Professor Carpenter's expectations. Of the whole hundred all but the ten bigots would be able to teach under the heading, as Mr. Wood put it, of 'truthfulness, honesty and so forth,' all such essentials of religion as we can with justice impose upon or effectively teach to all children alike, whether their parents be Romanists, Orthodox Protestants, Unitarians, Agnostics or Atheists. Mr. Peach fears that the old cry of 'Godless education' will be raised again, which is not much of an argument to lay before men of courage and conviction, especially those who consider that nothing properly to be called education can be properly called Godless. The time has come to look beyond these matters of lesser expediency to the great principles which have been too long sunk beneath the weight of the compromise; and if the Conference discussion served to bring us to this higher point of view, it will have done much good.

A TIMELY PROTEST.

THE Rev. John Byles, of Wakefield, late of Ealing, has sent the following letter to the Editor of the *Christian World* :—

Sir,—I observe in your issue of the 6th inst. an extract from a sermon purported to have been preached on Sunday last by my old college friend, Dr. Barrett, of Norwich. The extract is so astounding that I would fain believe that some grievous mistake has occurred. Dr. Barrett had been speaking, apparently, to his people regarding our Unitarian brethren, indicating the incalculable debt which England is under to them—and pre-eminently to Dr. Martineau—for the teaching they have given. Dr. Barrett is made to say, 'I never pronounce condemnation upon them (Unitarians) for their teaching regarding the Divinity of Christ, but I do say to them, "We cannot join you in worship; you cannot join us in prayer." To me it is incredible that so sad and shocking a sentence can have fallen from the lips of so good and kindly a man. When Jesus would teach his disciples to pray, he said, "After this manner shall ye pray, saying, "Our Father." It is "after this manner" that Dr. Martineau and those associated with him pray and worship. Can we not join with them in worship such as this? If not, it can only be because we are not the disciples of Jesus, but of some later teacher. "The first words on our lips," Dr. Barrett is further made to say, "would be blasphemy on yours." Assuredly not, if we simply follow the teaching and example of the Master. In the great Parliament of Religions, held in Chicago, men of every faith united every morning in the repetition of the one perfect prayer—"Our Father, which art in heaven." In spite of endless diversity of creed, common worship was found possible. And yet Dr. Barrett says such worship is impossible between us, as Congregationalists, and men such as Dr. Martineau, Mr. Stopford Brooke, and my own much honoured friend, Dr. Brooke Herford. The assertion is too sad. For myself, I have not only worshipped with Unitarians, and that greatly to my profit, but I have at times enjoyed the privilege of conducting their worship, as I shall hope to do again. And certainly on such occasions there was no sense of 'blasphemy' in my own mind, nor had I any reason to suppose that such a feeling existed in the minds of those whose worship I endeavoured to assist. I shall rejoice to hear from Dr. Barrett that he has been misrepresented by your correspondent. If he has not, and he did make the assertion reported, I will still cling to the belief that further reflection will bring him to see that

such an utterance, hastily made, as I would hope, cannot be in accordance with the 'Mind of the Master.'

MR. HODGSON PRATT AND THE UNITARIANS.

At the meeting of the Conference on Friday week, when extracts were read from Mr. Hodgson Pratt's paper on 'International Arbitration' (given in full in our Supplement this week), the following interesting letter was read by Mr. C. Fenton, to whom it had been addressed. We are sure that our readers will join us in the hope that Mr. Pratt will soon recover strength, and live to see the clearer dawning of the day of peace and goodwill amongst the nations. He wrote :—

National Liberal Club, London.

7th April, 1897.

Dear Mr. Fenton,—Please say to the members of the Conference what a bitter disappointment I experience in being unable to meet them. I have been looking forward with the deepest interest and pleasure to this meeting, for many months past, and I would willingly have run considerable risk, had I felt it right to do so.

I desire to express to those who will be present at this Conference the strong personal affection and profound esteem which I entertain for the Churches generally called 'Unitarian.' Among those present on this occasion are the descendants and near relatives of those whose names were familiar to me as 'household words' when I was growing up to manhood.

If I have tried to do anything in life that was of use to my fellow-men, the impulse came in those formative days, from the men and women to whom I refer. The voices and the faces of some of them are as distinct as if I heard and saw them last week. It is invidious to single out names; but I must mention the names of that saint-like woman, *Mary Carpenter*, and her beloved brothers, *Philip* and *Russell*. Even now, I cannot write their names without emotion. Why is it, too, that, amidst a crowd of forgotten incidents of those days, I can remember so vividly the face of the mild and gentle Dr. William Lant Carpenter, of Bristol, when my father took me one day from Bath to see him, when I was quite a boy,—to that house from which have radiated a thousand good influences? Why is it? Because, in that household of faith, there were men and women who were Saints, in every sense of the word,—whose beauty shone forth when they looked or spoke.

I feel led to say all this when I remember that it is so often declared that the Unitarian faith never makes the heart beat or the soul glow with divine inspiration.

Circumstances have separated me from the disciples and apostles of this little flock, but their words have remained with me during all these years. When I was entering in life, in India, as well as in England, was not the Evangelical fervour of Orville Dewey, of William Ellery Channing and Ephraim Peabody, strong to help and strengthen in many a difficulty?

This Church has, indeed, had a divine mission to the world, and its history has been marked by splendid moral courage, patient faith under every form of discouragement, and the unassuming devotion to good work on the part of all its members.

The outer and visible signs of its success may be wanting, but the special Truths which the Unitarian Churches have been charged to deliver have penetrated hundreds of other congregations, although the latter have not known it, and do not know it.

Circumstances have made it a duty on my part to worship in other folds, and nothing has more strongly impressed me than the fact that the 'peculiar' doctrines of 'Orthodox' Christianity are less and less dwelt on. For thirty-five years I have been in the habit of exclaiming, as I came out of church and chapel, 'What an excellent Unitarian sermon!' So there is nothing to discourage the noble defenders of our simple faith. What matters it where divine truths are preached and taught, so long as they are thought.

One word more. In this vast world of theological nihilism, scepticism, hopelessness, ignorantism, or downright atheism, the Unitarians have a field of work, where none others have any chance. One most painful aspect of the modern world is that vast mass of

human life, without divine hope or strength; and what a field for the labourers of the Church whose representatives are this week assembled at Sheffield.

I apologise for writing so many confused words, but in the fullness of my disappointment, I could not say less.

Heartily yours,
HODGSON PRATT.

NOTES AND NEWS.

WE are obliged to hold over a good deal of news and other matter this week.

THE 'Mayor of Jerusalem' has come to London (why to London?) to lecture on the 'essential identity of Judaism with Mohammedanism.' He is said to be a learned and distinguished man.

IN connection with the Manchester District Association of Presbyterian and Unitarian Churches' Grand Bazaar, November, 1897, we are informed that, when the projected bazaar was mentioned to one of our leading ministers in California, he was good enough to say that he thought a parcel could be made up of purely Californian articles, 'just to show that the Pacific Coast Unitarians are strongly in sympathy with the endeavours of the English Unitarians to spread the gospel of Unitarianism throughout the land.' This example may be commended to friends in other parts of the world.

WE are very glad to hear that there was a good demand for books at Sheffield, and that some of the pamphlets to which we drew special attention in our issue before the meeting of the Conference were eagerly sought for. We are informed that the receipts amounted to just over £30; but this might easily have been increased to £40 or £50 had Mr. Hare been provided with sufficient stock to supply all demands. The chief inquiries were for Mrs. Rawlings's 'Addresses and Illustrative Stories,' Miss Frances E. Cooke's little biography of 'Dorothea Dix,' Mr. Armstrong's 'God and the Soul,' and Dr. Drummond's newly published 'Pauline Benediction.' The works of Dr. Martineau and Mr. Stopford Brooke were eagerly sought after, and the stock of them quickly sold. There was also a good demand for photographs of Dr. Martineau, Mr. Brooke, and Mrs. Humphry Ward. We have only to add that Mr. Green and Mr. Hare are regularly on duty at Essex Hall, and will be very glad to supply readers who are obliged to have their Conference at home.

SLY'S IMPROVED PATENT TRUSS.—(44 prize medals, diplomas, and royal appointments awarded.) Experience shows that the old-fashioned steel-spring trusses necessarily press upon and often disease parts of the body before were in a perfectly healthy condition. To those suffering from rupture any invention that gives positive relief is a real blessing. The following valuable testimonials prove the worth of our 'Special Patent Truss.' Sir B. Ward Richardson, the eminent physician, writing to the 'Medical Guardian,' says :—'Sly's truss is one which I should advise patients to try. It is one that is more comfortable to wear, always adapts itself to the every movement of the body, and can be worn with every degree of comfort. It will in all cases be found effectual.' In the following the names are not given for obvious reasons—the originals can be seen on application :—'After wearing your truss for six months the hernia failed to appear on standing up without the Truss, even coughed.—M.D.' 'Your Truss is more curative than any I know.—M.D.' 'Truss answers admirably; is a great improvement on the old patterns.—M.R.C.S.' 'I must congratulate you on your success; your specialite alone will be recommended by me.—M.D.' It was worn and recommended by Sir Andrew Clark (late president of the Royal College of Physicians), and is simple, rapid, and effective. 44 prize medals, diplomas, and royal appointments awarded. Particulars and prices of Sly Bros., Oxford.

COMMUNION ADDRESS.*

BY THE REV. BROOKE HERFORD, D.D.

I WELCOME you, on the very threshold of our Conference, to this innermost and tenderest service of our religious life.

I think it is not without its interest, too, that it is unquestionably the oldest of all our Christian institutions. The beginning of the Christian Church was not in meetings for worship or preaching, but in simple friendly gatherings to break bread together in memory of Christ. In 'gladness and singleness of heart' it says—and, indeed, it is a wonderful thing to think how—even so soon after the crucifixion, an instinct of triumphant joy had lifted that breaking bread together out of its associations of gloom and death into a glad triumphal faith that looked towards some great blessing to come to men through him. They could not have told what that blessing was really to be; but it was a true outgoing of their hearts, which loved to remember him, and which seemed to come nearer to him, and nearer to each other, in this little memorial act.

There is another thought which comes to me afresh every time I read those few brief sentences in which Paul tells of the beginning of this memorial, that last evening, 'the same night in which he was betrayed.' I do not think we put the stress we might on the curious closeness of a really contemporary record with which those words of Paul take us right back to the time and to the perspective of Christ's place already in human hearts. Why, the allusions in this passage to his betrayal, and to his blood being about to be shed, and to the great faith in which Jesus had bade them take these things, as witnesses and covenants, into the new life which lay before them as his disciples,—I tell you, these things really carry with them all the main characteristics of the gospel story. Ah, the gospels themselves were not written till a generation or two later, and I find many people feeling as if that lapse of time made the whole gospel story a little uncertain, as if it needed some closer confirmation. But here we have that very confirmation! Paul was writing this about him whom he already calls 'the Lord Jesus,' within twenty-five years of the time when Jesus had been crucified. What is twenty-five years? Why, it is ten years more than that since I used to minister in this place, and all the events of that time, and the men and women who were with me here, are still like things of to-day. And Paul was ten years nearer to these things of which he was writing, and he had been in and out among those to whom these things were the great memories of their lives. And so this is one help to me every time I read these words and join in this service. I feel I get my feet upon the rock again; I am carried right back to the time, and the very spirit of the time, out of which our whole Christian faith has grown, and this little service which was at the very root of all its growth.

And so it helps us to take our place, in thought, with those disciples, and with that gracious One who sat among them at the last supper he should have with them. I see him take the basin of water and the towel, and go round among them washing their feet—to teach them, after their disputings which should be the greatest, that

in his kingdom of the new life, greatness should come by serving.

I see him also, as the supper was ending, repeating the little act with which every such Jewish supper must have begun—breaking another of the Passover cakes that each might eat a morsel with him, and again passing round the cup, as the pledge of a new covenant in his blood, a sort of 'loving cup' which they should henceforth drink together in remembrance of him. For it must never be forgotten that this little rite, almost in the very form in which we keep the Communion still, was simply the little commemoration with which the Sabbath supper began—and begins still—in every Jewish household, and which Jesus must have been familiar with from childhood. And so he repeats it with them now.

Did he mean to institute it as a binding form for ever? Who can tell just how much thought he had of what that little ancient rite thus associated with their leader might do to keep them together? The greater fact is, that it so took hold of their hearts that they loved to repeat it, and it spread and grew with all the growth of Christian life; and always—whatever other meanings might be added on, always with this meaning at the heart of it—of its being the reminder and the sign of their belonging to him, and of their belonging to one another! And if now and then something in it seems like perpetuating some of those superstitions and excrescences which grew on to it in the ages after Christ, I think it should be easier to put all such associations away, because its real connection is far more with the long line of the Reformers; for one of the first things done in almost every movement of reformation has been to rescue this communion from its mystical, its sacerdotal, its 'mass' and sacrificial meanings, and to restore it to its ancient, simple, beautiful, meanings of a loving commemoration of the Master, and fellowship and comradeship among his people.

I know that some shrink from the material symbolism of it. And yet I do not know why we should. With all the newness and modernism of our age, there is at the heart of it a great liking for ancient and venerable forms. Human nature cannot do without forms, and this little commemoration and communion of eating and drinking together is based upon an outward symbolism of fidelity that is as old as humanity. Has it ever struck you how such a little material thing may be especially impressive? Edward Everett Hale told me that when he went to Transylvania, among our churches there, he felt the value of the Communion as he had never felt it before! For he did not understand Hungarian, and the service was all in an unknown tongue; but when there came the bread and the cup in the Communion—that was something in a universal language, and make the whole service alive!

But, after all, these are comparatively outward things, and I want my deepest thought for you to be, not just the freshening of these outward meanings, but the deepening of that which is at the very heart of it—our loving discipleship to Christ, and our brotherhood and comradeship in that discipleship.

Ah! friends, I must not now attempt to speak of all the help which this conscious attitude of discipleship to Christ may give to us. But let me briefly outline one or two of the ways in which it helps us in this religious faith and service which has drawn us here to-day.

For one thing, it helps to keep our faith more even and steadfast. If I am to depend simply on my own discerning of religious things—well, there are times when I can see them clearly, but there are other times when I seem to see nothing; and if my own seeing were all, I should be apt to sink into utter doubt. But with this great Master, holding his hand, as it were, I know the divine things are still true. I may be in the shadow, but I know the light is there. In that light, shining along the ages, some things are settled—God is, and human duty, and the eternal life; and even when for a time I cannot see them, I hold to them by faith in him, in the sense of how in him the light was never dim.

And so, again, I think that this distinct discipleship to Christ lifts us out of all small self-consciousness in this life of faith. Self-consciousness is the bane of life. I am bidden to 'work out my own thought, and hold it, because it is mine.' That is the very thing I want to get away from. I do not want to think of my great trust in God, and righteousness, and heaven, as just my thought. I do not want to feel it as something I have seen and set up for myself. When I do think of it that way, it seems a smaller thing, and less sure—and I begin to distrust it. I want to rise out of that. Of course, I must have thought these things, and seen them with my own soul; but I do not want that to be my habitual way of looking at them, or of presenting them to others.

I shall never forget how this came to me early in my ministry. I had come here just forty years ago from a small village congregation, and found myself at once—a very young man, only a few years out of college—set here to minister to a great congregation of men and women of older years, and many of them of ripe wisdom and experience. And it came to me—How could I be much help to them? Who was I, that I should have to teach them? And then it was that there came this sense of how it was not in my own strength I was standing here—that this whole institution, and my part in it, were of Christ. I felt a new meaning in Paul's words: 'We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord.' It came to me in its most special force in this communion service; and I can only say that it made my ministry from that hour a different and better thing. It is not just my truth I preach. I like to feel that I am joining in with my fellow-creatures. I am simply sharing in the greatest life of my race. I feel as one of the great family, clasping the feet of God, and humbly treading together the ways of the immortal life. And in this great leader of souls, it is just this vast fellowship I feel, and in which I lose myself, and rise into something of that loftier faith and spirit which I am looking to and trying to follow.

And one other help—perhaps the greatest—from this distinct feeling of discipleship to Christ. I think it gives strength and patience to our moral effort, and to all the moral effort of the world. In that leadership of Christ, I feel the touch of that long line of faithful souls who, through the ages, have still rolled on the tide of the world's battle against wrong and sin. What has helped all the thousands and ten thousands who have joined in that mighty conflict, and are in it still? I believe it is, most of all, this sense of the leadership and headship of Christ. What am I alone? But I am not alone! I am one with the shadowy millions

* Delivered at the opening service of the National Triennial Conference, at Sheffield, April 6 1897.

of his followers. I am part in the great solidarity of Christian souls. I am one in that long conflict which has never ceased. And so I take my part more hopefully. I hold on in it more confidently. I know in him that the Lord's victory at last is sure!

Yes, here is the essence of the whole matter! Our best life is not that which we live alone, or which each age lives alone. Our best life is that in which we draw together, and in which we link ourselves, and lose ourselves, in the great fellowships of the ages. And still, after all the keenest questioning of our time, that fellowship which began in Christ, and still continues in his name, stands as the best. And so in that Communion we once more take our places, and try to consecrate our hearts anew to its high meaning and its holy service!

THE RELIGIOUS OUTLOOK.

HOPEFUL SIGNS.

ADDRESSES AT SHEFFIELD.

The great public meeting, held at Albert Hall, Sheffield, on Thursday evening last week, in connection with the Conference, was in most respects a great success. The singing of Oliver Wendell Holmes's hymn, after the introductory programme of organ selections, finely rendered by Mr. Phillips, was in itself an inspiration. The addresses given subsequently on 'Signs of Hope and Progress in the Religious Outlook of our Time,' were listened to with marked attention by the vast audience. The chair was taken by Mr. J. R. BEARD, President of the Conference, who said they would agree with him at the outset that the organisers of the meeting had approached the subject in no narrow or limited way, since they proposed to treat it from the social and the scientific, as well as from the theological and devotional, standpoints. In this way of dealing with the subject, they had his heartiest sympathy for many reasons. It seemed to him that the world was getting somewhat impatient of a religion which concerned itself chiefly in, if not altogether with, the future state—a religion whose sanction is supernatural, whose mandates are interpreted by a sacred caste, whose rewards and punishments are distant and illusory. The separation between the church and the world, as he read the page of history, had always been harmful to the church, and it is only by teaching a religion in the future which is natural, as conforming to the baser laws of the human mind; universal, as responding to the desires of the human heart; and practical, as applicable to the conditions of human life, that the churches can ever expect again to wield any extensive sway over mankind. But we must remember that religion existed apart from all churches, and as a predominant factor in the history of our country. Religion was a tie between God and man, the electric current ever flashing intelligence between the Creator and the created. As the word betokened, it bound us, constrained us, spoke to us without the interposition of priest or creed or synod, and compelled us along the path of progress and development, and this being so, they did well, he thought, to scan closely the conditions of the present in order, if they might, to discern signs of hope and progress in this direction. He felt constrained to say a few words on one of the points to be dealt with that evening. In the revolt against supernaturalism and sacerdotalism, a prominent part had been

played by those who, alienated from the ordinary religions, recognised the imperative demand of the human mind for something to worship, and had deified humanity and made it the object of religion. This scheme of faith, originated by Auguste Comte, had, under various modifications, a large number of followers at the present day, so much so, that even among those who professed to believe in an omnipotent Deity, there were not a few whose only practical faith was in the religion of humanity. Those people avowed themselves as Socialists, and sought the regeneration of the world and the progress of the race by legislative enactment. They would have Parliament assume the collective ownership and control of the means of production, distribution, and exchange, and they advocate various changes in our social and political organisation, many of which had his heartiest sympathy, though some of which he could not but regard as impracticable or even injurious to the public weal. But it was not so much the objects at which they aimed as of the methods by which they sought to obtain them that he would speak. It had been said that they could not make men sober by Act of Parliament. Still less could they make men virtuous and self-denying by Act of Parliament. One great error, in his opinion, that legislative socialism made was that it proposed to itself the redress of material evil only, leaving the very pith and root of the matter out of the question, the spiritual and moral elevation of the people. To his mind, the sacerdotalist, holding out to man a scheme of redemption based on the principle of ideal self-sacrifice, did better for the world than he who would abolish poverty and suffering by legislative means. He was one of those who firmly believed that the soul of man was the supreme factor in the progress of the race, that ideals in every sphere of thought and action were more important than any material conditions whatever, and that it was only by working from the centre to the circumference, from the individual to the general, from the soul of man to the conditions which concern it, that any real and lasting progress could be made.

CHURCH LIFE.

The Rev. Dr. BROOKE HERFORD then proceeded to deal with the subject of the evening in relation to Church Life. There could be, he was sure, no difference of opinion as to the wonderful improvement which had gone on in the life and doings of the various churches in the simple matter of peace amongst themselves, which was the basis of any friendly comparison of thought, and which was the best guarantee against getting into narrow ecclesiastical grooves. There was far more flying at each other's throats and more bickering between the two political parties in a week than there was between all the churches in a year. Some of them had got tired of hearing the disagreements between the churches and the necessity for bringing them closer together so much talked about and so timidly touched. It was, however, a hopeful sign of the times that churches and churchmen should gather together and speak about these things and quote Scripture (laughter). Their church friends met at Lambeth, and were never tired of discussing how they could get all the people of England united into one. Their Nonconformist friends—he would have said allies, but they wouldn't have the Unitarians as allies—met periodically at

Grindelwald, and combined the most delightful Swiss picnics with the consideration of how far they could extend Christian charity so as to admit others all into one fold. That was all very well, but it was not the whole thing. When Horace Greeley was questioned at the time they were wanting to get from paper money and to resume specie payments, and was asked for the best method of resumption, he replied, 'The best method of resumption is to resume' (loud laughter). He commended that to all his friends and all the religious bodies who were so anxious to resume Christian fellowship. The best way was to resume, and the best way of resuming was to go to those nearest to them and resume with them. He found, however, this peculiarity, that each of those religious bodies who were anxious to join others to themselves wanted to begin with someone a long way off. His High Church neighbour, who belonged to the English Church Union, which is the highest thing on that subject (laughter), was in deadly anxiety to get the Pope to recognise his orders, that he might unite with them; and anxious to get even with the Greek Church, but he would not touch the Dissenter with a ten foot pole. And so his Nonconformist friends, were so anxious for the same thing in principle, but it must be most carefully guarded in this way and that. They were eager for communion, but they put the words in their proposition, 'No Unitarian need apply.' He might say, however, that, some time ago, a meeting of Nonconformists was held in a large and populous neighbourhood where he lived, and they voted that Unitarians should be included (loud applause). They should not applaud too soon. A second meeting was held soon afterwards, to ratify the rules, and there was a discouragingly small attendance, great pressure having been put on from the outside against such a sacrilegious idea. At the second meeting, they again unanimously endorsed the principle; but last week they met a third time, and, in the kindest and gentlest way, with expressions of respect that were most satisfactory and delightful, they advised that the Nonconformist Union should be dissolved, and voted to do this, and were about to start an Evangelical Union. On the whole, he had rather wanted to start, as an expression for the matter in all its aspects, 'The Christian Union, Limited' (loud laughter). Still, even limited, they were glad of it, and it was interesting and refreshing to them to see how these friends, who used to oppose each other quite as bitterly as now they opposed the Unitarians, were now themselves friendly. When we thought of the divisions of a hundred years ago, there was ground for hope, for they all knew that long before another hundred was past, their opponents would be ashamed of not owning their body as fellow Nonconformists and fellow Christians. Take, for example, the great subject the Chairman had touched upon, that of eternal punishment. He did not think he could find a decent Congregational minister to-day who would say he believed that he (the speaker) must be damned because he did not hold this or that doctrine; but that was exactly what one of the leading Congregational ministers in that city, the Rev. David Loxton, said when talking on that very subject. He wondered if they had all seen the new creed of the Rev. John Watson, better known as Ian Maclaren. It was good to see what could come out of a Scotch Presbyterian

of the present day. His creed in his own words was simply this: 'I believe in the Fatherhood of God; I believe in the words of Christ; I believe in the pure life; I believe in the Beatitudes; I promise to trust in God; I promise to forgive my enemies; I promise to follow Christ.' That was about as good a creed as their old friend Ivie Mackay's, who, when asked for his creed as a Unitarian, replied, 'I believe in one God, and in 20s. in the £'—not a bad creed in these days, though one liked a little more of Ian Maclaren's mixed with it. It was a good creed of Ian Maclaren's. He had been hinting at it in his books for a long time, but was now standing out for it boldly. What they, as a body, had to do was to hold their place till the enunciation of these creeds was possible to Presbyterian or Methodist—not only possible, but admissible. They wanted there to be one church in the world, where men might hold sentiments like those and preach them from the housetops without whisper of any heresy. The moment all churches began to recognise these truths they would find themselves nearer together, and nearer to this re-union of Christendom Unlimited (applause).

SOCIAL QUESTIONS.

The Rev. S. FLETCHER WILLIAMS, speaking on the social side of the subject, said that an outlook upon this side only suggested the question, Are we better than our fathers? He had come to the conclusion that the best day England had seen—the fullest of fruition, and the fullest of hope—was to-day. He knew it was the habit of zealous reformers, impatient of the slow progress of the pet reform in which they were concerned, to paint dark and heart-breaking pictures of England's condition and prospects. To hear a temperance reformer, one would suppose the English people were becoming more drunken every day. He believed from his heart that they were becoming more sober and more temperate in the true sense of temperance. To hear an advocate of women's rights, one would suppose that woman was never so downtrodden as now; and the labour reformer painted such pictures as would lead one to assume, as he assumed, that the employer was never so despotic, or selfish, or callous, and labour never so oppressed. In a word, those who would lift up human society represented it as having fallen into such an abyss of evil and neglect as would induce you to suppose that it was hardly worth while trying to save it. Something of all this was natural; one felt the reality of those evils on which one had fixed his attention, but more, he thought, was due to the improvement in the moral sense of the people—to their recognising evils once endured without a single thought. The most promising thing about the present condition of humanity in England was the restless desire for improvement. He believed this age was full of promise and of the potency of good. It has witnessed an unparalleled advance in the education and intelligence of all classes of the people, and he believed it would be a very grand day for this England of ours when there was as much readiness and willingness to spend money upon the education of her children as on her death-dealing instruments of war, because the true glory of a nation consisted, not in the size of her army, not in the might of her navy, not in the strength of her fortifications, but in the number of its intelligent, educated citizens (loud applause).

SCIENCE.

The Rev. GEO. ST. CLAIR took up the subject from a scientific point of view. He said it was very interesting to note the change which has taken place in the appreciation of science and scientists by the churches since the old days when a man who might have gained a smattering of scientific knowledge was often burned at the stake. Science had ceased to be under a ban because it had been found to be useful, and it became more useful as it came more into favour. He believed that every improvement in science was followed by a long struggle between good and evil, always discerning a balance on the side of good. There was a time when all progress in science was attributed to some evil source. Indeed, all nature was regarded as the playground of the Devil, who had usurped the realm and the power of the Creator. He showed, by many illustrations, that there was no longer any conflict between religion and science, and argued that there never could be any conflict between them, although books had been written professing to reconcile them (applause). The warfare was not between science and religion, but between scientific men and priests—a warfare against false theology and not against religion itself. There was a time when orthodox ministers stood aloof from Professor Huxley, the champion of Darwin, but when Darwin died he was buried in Westminster Abbey, and dignitaries of the Church as well as officers of the State were very glad to be bearers of his pall (applause). Yet there was no question that Darwin taught that mankind and the ape tribe had a common ancestor, and it created great commotion in the religious world; but now people were not much alarmed that the doctrine of evolution was making its way. The majority of people looked upon the Book of Jonah as a parable, to be read in much the same way as many of the parables of Christ,—a beautiful little romance with a moral in it. He alluded to many of the leading clergymen and ministers who are pronounced evolutionists, and said the churches were now rather proud to have scientific men in their ranks, knowing that religion had nothing to fear from the advance of science (applause).

THE BIBLE.

Rev. W. BINNS spoke on the Bible. He said Professor Jowett had told them that they should interpret the Bible the same way as they would interpret any other book. Mr. Gladstone had said the same thing;—not quite in as luminous a way (laughter), but, of course, in a more voluminous way (renewed laughter). In the Methodist Sunday-school he had attended in his early days, he was taught that whatever he found in the Bible was the plain word of God. The Secularists, with whom he afterwards got mixed up, said there was no good at all in the Bible, and it was really one extreme that created the other. If there had not been that absolute infallibility on the one side, there would not have been the downright wickedness on the other. They, as Unitarians, said that in the Bible there were many different books; that they represented many ages of life, standing, perhaps, for a period of more than 2000 years; that they were originally written in many different languages; and that they represented many different minds naturally not agreeing with one another. All these things, therefore, had to be taken into consideration in reading the Bible, and whatever inspiration there might have been, they

would, he thought, agree that the result must be a human production. Let them consider what they found in the Bible. They found mythology there. Surely, the story of the Garden of Eden was pure and simple mythology. The true Eden was yet before them. It was nothing they had left behind, but something they had to create. They had all sorts of legends in the Bible; and as for the science of the Bible, it was not fair, considering when it was written, to expect it to be accurate. The Bible was a literary record of the feelings which men and women had experienced in their deepest moments of life, and their love of that which was richest and best in them. The beauty of the Bible was that all through it was a record of progress, but never attaining unto the best of all the genius of humanity (applause).

Dr. W. BLAKE ODGERS, Q.C., also addressed the meeting. Much, he said, had been said by previous speakers about signs of hope and progress in a general way, but nothing had been said from a Unitarian point of view. If they looked at home, there were many signs of hope and progress there. Thank God, there were many, but not yet enough. What were they? They were Unitarian Christians; and, as they had heard that day, they had inherited a glorious heritage from the past. Were they all now working up to that glorious heritage? Were they taking the place that Unitarians used to take forty or fifty years ago in all good movements. He thought they were a little better than they were ten or twelve years ago, but they were not in his opinion all that they ought to be. He saw signs of hope and progress, but he wanted to see signs of work (applause).

The meeting was brought to a conclusion with another hymn.

IMPRESSIONS OF THE CONFERENCE.

[FROM a series of communications with which we have been favoured, we select the following. Others will appear next week. —ED. INQ.]

Will you kindly permit me to say a few words of farewell. My sojourn in England is fast coming to an end; therefore, I feel more strongly now than before how fortunate and happy I was to be with you again. It was, as it always is, a blessing to see the faces of those who shared and helped the pleasures of youth in an age when the cares of everyday duty often keep us back from following the aspirations of the heart and soul. Having seen a great number of my English friends of a long time—nearly two decades—ago, I feel my strength and energy renewed, and I hope that now, as I take up my sacred work again, I shall be able to go on with it, in the service of God and man, with greater success, I hope, than ever before. I may, perhaps, confess that the influence of personal friends on such occasions has always the greatest share in stimulating me to works of usefulness. But anyone who was present on those grand four days at Sheffield, even if a stranger in every respect, could not have escaped the inspiration for good and noble thoughts and deeds. I have always felt that Unitarianism in England has a very great power, but at Sheffield I saw it manifested in the greatest measure. I take with me the impression that the tone and character of the meetings

were of the highest. It is a great surprise to every outsider to find that in a comparatively small community so many excellent thinkers and speakers turn up one after another, each one of them with some specially good and useful thought. I cannot tell on which day and in which moment the highest point was reached. I felt that everybody was earnest and inspired. I may, perhaps, confess that to me—who is not much accustomed to see ladies on the platform—the ladies' meeting was a real surprise. I take with me the conviction that our ladies have not only the right, but also the might, to partake in the work of that reformation which is now going on in the moral and spiritual world; and I am sure that if the work is done with their aid, its result will be more sure, and its effect more lasting, than it could be without it. My fervent desire is that all those noble and practical ideas, which were expressed at the Conference, may be realised for the promotion of our common faith and for the benefit of mankind.

GEORGE BOROS.

It is difficult to sum up one's impressions of four such days of spiritual refreshing as the Triennial Conference affords. There is the joy of meeting old friends and comrades, the delight of talking over past times and present work, and the novel pleasure of seeing many strange and unaccustomed faces. I am afraid we ministers of the North sometimes think we know pretty nearly all the parsons in the body, but at Conference times we are thoroughly disabused of any such notion by the presence of numerous unfamiliar figures, mainly clad in high clerical attire. The impression left upon my mind by the Conference as a whole is that we are far from being in a dying or a moribund condition, but that we are, on the contrary, blessed with more life and vigour than we had imagined. The meetings were full of hope and encouragement. The reports from different parts of the country indicate that the better organisation of the local Assemblies and Unions is beginning to tell. The churches represented in the Conference have been some time getting into line; they are now getting under way and gathering momentum, and in another ten or fifteen years the results will be more apparent than they are now. I regret that more emphasis was not laid upon the desirability of forming a 'Church Building Fund,' from which loans could be obtained free of interest for building Sunday-schools and places of worship, with a Managing Committee of the Fund, competent to give advice as to sites and deeds and buildings. I was not less pleased at the clear pronouncement of the Conference upon the Education Question than at the evident relief and satisfaction with which the great majority of the delegates abandoned a position at once untenable and illogical, and deliberately pronounced in favour of a just disposition of public money for Education. At last we have declined to postpone justice to expediency, and fairness to policy, in this matter, and I, for one, am glad. The general arrangements were so good at Sheffield that it would ill become me to offer any counsels of perfection, but I venture to suggest that at the next Conference late-comers be requested to remain outside during the opening Devotional Services. The effect of these Services was greatly marred by the noise and interruption caused by the continual stream of friends

entering the Hall. It is strange that we tolerate at a religious service what we should never allow at the Theatre or the Concert Hall. Such interruption is neither fair to those who are leading our thoughts to higher things, nor to those who have come to worship. In conclusion, I must say that the Conference has been more helpful and inspiring than I had anticipated from the programme. To have met so many of our leaders face to face, to have listened to that noble sermon of Stopford Brooke's, has been, indeed, a benediction.

WALTER H. BURGESS.

Heaton Moor.

To give one's impressions of the National Conference in half a column is not easy. You may gather what my impressions are when I quote a line from a Methodist hymn, I have been there and still would go.

Yes, I still would go, but, if I had to go through a similar week once a month, I believe I should soon be used up. I came back refreshed in mind and spirit, but the flesh was very weak. Our Sheffield friends, by the right royal way they entertained us, have made it difficult for all future hosts. Everything worked with the smoothness and precision of machinery, and nothing seemed to be left to chance. Personally, I should have been glad of weather a trifle warmer, if it could have been arranged. There was one room in Channing Hall which contained a fire, which occasionally I found to be a pleasant retreat. But from the welcome of the Foreign Delegates on Tuesday afternoon to the vote of thanks to our Sheffield friends on Friday afternoon, there was nothing under their control which one could wish omitted or improved. It just occurs to me that the thanks to our entertainers might have been given early on Friday, and not last thing, when the attendance was thinning off. Those who attended the Communion Service will know, if they never knew before, how impressive and helpful a Communion Service may be made. The service which followed it, from the opening hymn to the benediction, was as near perfection as Unitarian human nature is likely to get. Of course, we expected something from the Rev. Stopford Brooke, and we got it. Of the various papers read, it seems invidious to make a selection where all were so good, but the two that took most hold of me were the Rev. Joseph Wood's and Professor Carpenter's. One part of Mr. Wood's paper was addressed to laymen, and the next part to ministers. It did just occur to me that it would have been nice to have had none but ministers present while they were being addressed in such impressive terms, and that when the shortcomings and duties of laymen were being dwelt upon, that then the audience should be lay and cleric. Mr. Carpenter's paper requires reading and studying, and it is to be hoped it may appear in a permanent form. The public meeting in the Albert Hall was sufficiently crowded to make the numbers impressive; the speeches were good, though not too short; but it is no use denying that a jarring note was sounded near the end, which would have spoiled the whole thing had the previous notes been inferior to what they were. As it was, one came away feeling we are not going to let one false note spoil a concert. Personally, I rejoice that the Conference rang true on the Education and Cretan questions. What I mean by ringing true is giving expression to my own feelings and opinions on these

matters. I cannot think of a better definition. One of the things that astonished me most was how Mr. Manning managed to write such an excellent paper amidst the excitement of preparing to receive the Conference. It did not err on the side of brevity, and, perhaps, had he been less busy it might have been shorter. One of the gems of the Conference was the Ladies' Meeting. How well they all spoke! and what a power for good we have in the ladies of our free churches whenever we learn a little more how to utilise it!

I came away feeling that there is more power in our ranks than some people suppose; that as a denomination we are not going to die, nor are there any signs of death; but that we have much to learn, that there is much in our house that wants setting in order, that our work is beset with difficulties, and that the spirit in which the Conference baptised us will enable us to do a truer work in the Lord's vineyard than we have ever done before.

W. HARRISON.

Stalybridge.

In putting down some impressions, while they are yet fresh, I must not omit the business-like arrangements of our Sheffield friends. They appointed a strong committee of delegates from the congregations and Sunday-schools of all our churches in the neighbourhood—Norfolk-street, Upperthorpe, Rotherham, Stannington, Doncaster, and Chesterfield—under the presidency of Mr. Michael Hunter, J.P., of Greystones, a descendant of one of the original founders of our Church there, in the XVII. century; and fitted everything together so that all went on with clock-like regularity. The hospitality, not alone of our fellow-churchmen, but of many of other churches, was munificent and considerate. I say 'considerate,' because the very nature of the host may sometimes tend to 'kill with kindness'; but there was much nice forbearance shown, so that the delegates had leisure for quiet and rest between whiles. The initial Communion Service on the Tuesday, raised by the address of Dr. Herford from the low level of a mechanical sacerdotalism to be, indeed, a Sacrament of spiritual communion with the Saviour, was an impressive function which will be long remembered by those who were present; and the tone throughout the meetings was emphatically reverent, broken only by the regrettable speech of the Rev. W. Binns, of Blackpool. The high tone did not prevent a practical wisdom being shewn when necessary; the subjects, of 'Ministerial Superannuation' and of 'Means of Recruiting our Ministry,' were taken up in a manner which promises good results in the near future; and the Religious and Missionary sections, under Mr. Harry Rawson, J.P., and Dr. Herford, gave valuable opportunities for interchange of thought. The Women's Work section, also, under Mrs. Manning, the charming wife of our good minister at Sheffield, shewed (if, indeed, that were necessary) the clear-headed and sympathetic spirit in which the 'faithful women not a few' are bearing their share. The music, under Mr. W. R. Stevenson, a grandson of the late Joseph Stevenson, one of the stalwart old pillars of Sheffield Unitarianism, left nothing to be desired; and the proverbial Yorkshire singing must have been a surprise to those who heard it in the hymns on the Thursday evening.

The sadly reckless speech of Mr. Binns, by his irreverent manner of treating the Bible, and the feelings of those who find it helpful, must inevitably do us harm. He was almost the last speaker; and, I fear, the effect will remain as the last impression. Would that some of our elder Clergy could impress upon him that the foolish laughter of a dozen or so of boys is not the kind of reward that a religious man looks for. Well, let us try and forget it; and hope that those, of *other* households of faith who were present or will hear of it, *may forget it also*. Saving this: the whole will be a source of encouragement, a deepening of the inner life, and a widening of the religious influence, for many of our isolated and patient workers in the faith.

HUGH STANNUS.

I HAVE attended three only of the seven 'Conferences,' and this one at Sheffield has deepened and strengthened me in an opinion I have had for some years, that the Unitarians of England, Scotland and Ireland never did a better day's work than when they instituted these 'Triennial Conferences.' I say so, because I believe they are proving to be a splendid means of bringing before the vast public outside the influence of Unitarian thought our views on theology and religion. No one surely can doubt that who saw the eagerness with which the people in Sheffield crowded into the Upper Chapel to hear the Rev. Stopford Brooke, and into the Albert Hall on Thursday evening. Then these Triennial Conferences being held, as they come round, in different parts of the country, give our ministers and the members of our churches whose means do not allow of their attending the British and Foreign Unitarian meetings in London an opportunity of hearing some of our leading men; and to those of our ministers who are labouring in isolated and sometimes obscure fields of labour, the heartiness and enthusiasm of such meetings as we have been attending in Sheffield must send them back heartened and inspired to their work. For myself, I went to Sheffield in a somewhat disappointed and desponding frame of mind. The sight of those largely attended meetings of earnest men and women, and the stirring and high-toned addresses to which I have listened have sent me home cheered and encouraged and proud that I belong, even as a humble private, to an army engaged in a noble conflict against sin and vice and irreligion, that I am helping a little in the triumph of the 'Kingdom of God and His righteousness' in the world. When so many good things were presented for our enjoyment, it is almost invidious to make selections. But abler pens than mine will doubtless deal with that noble sermon of the Rev. Stopford Brooke, and Professor Carpenter's fine paper on 'Immortality.' Of the former, I can only say it was worthy of the preacher, of the theme, and of the large and attentive and spell-bound congregation; and of the latter, that I look forward with pleasure to reading it when you report it fully in your next issue. The great meeting in the Albert Hall will not soon be forgotten by those who were privileged to be present. I much enjoyed the discussion on the 'Education Question,' and gladly gave my vote on the resolutions submitted to the meeting. There is much, of course, to be said on the other side, that the trained teachers, men and women, are better equipped than the majority of parsons for understanding and reaching the difficulties

of the child mind, but I am convinced that 'combined instruction on secular subjects, and separate teaching in religion' is the only solution of our present difficulties and the only way to peace on the great question of 'National Education.' Having received my own early education in a 'secular school,' founded in my native city by the late Wm. Ellis, of Birkbeck School fame, and which latterly had to be closed on account of the clamour of the clergy, I am persuaded that my own reverence for religion was in no way diminished, but rather increased, by the removal of the religious instruction I received to other hours and to other surroundings than those of the day school. I have no sympathy with those who would have excluded the discussion of the Cretan question from the Conference on the ground that it is a political question. It may be; but it was much more a question of humanity and sympathy with a people struggling to free themselves from the yoke of a vile and detestable tyranny. As for Mr. Warren's and Dr. Greaves' objections that notice ought to have been duly given that such a subject was to be brought before the Conference, may I ask when and where? The lamentable episodes of British guns being turned against Christians, and British soldiers being welcomed and escorted by the soldiers of our dear friend and ally, 'Abdul the Damned,' have been enacted within the last few weeks. How could any one have supposed a year ago that such disgraceful employment could have been found for British soldiers and British sailors? If, as Mr. Brooke told us on Tuesday evening, there are times when it behoves the pulpit to speak forth when crises in our national affairs arise, Mr. Wicksteed and Mr. Jacks did rightly in bringing before the Conference the Cretan question. One word more and then I shall close. One of the most enjoyable of the meetings was that of the ladies. What an admirable chairman (or is it chairwoman?) Mrs. Manning made. She and all the ladies who spoke were admirable speakers. Their voices were sweet, their enunciation clear and distinct, their speeches concise and to the point. I could not help thinking that, if our women speak as well in the domestic circle as they do on the public platform, and the 'curtain lecture' is still an institution available for the reproof and improvement of mankind, many husbands must have a bad time of it! If you think that is too audacious and irrelevant a remark to make in the sober columns of THE INQUIRER, you will, no doubt, exercise your editorial discretion and suppress it. W. MASON.

Leigh, Lancashire.

WE are glad to note that Mr. William Barton Worthington, of Manchester, the eldest son of Mr. S. B. Worthington, who was for so many years honourably connected with the London and North Western Railway Company, has been appointed Chief Engineer to the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Company.

CANON GORE, lecturing in Westminster Abbey on Tuesday on the Epistle to the Ephesians, made some apparently not very original or striking remarks on the Women's Movement. When St. Paul wrote, women in Asia Minor under the Empire enjoyed, he said, exceptional privileges, being allowed to hold municipal offices, and even to be rulers in those most conservative bodies, the Jewish Synagogues. And yet there are women who say we are progressing?

THE QUIET HOUR.

GOD SPEAKS TO MAN.

God speaks to man when'er he prays
With ardent, pleading soul,
And quickens him with life divine
That saves and makes him whole.

In tender hours of Love sincere,
When kindling feelings rise,
He fills the heart and fires the soul,
And makes it true and wise.

In Reason's eager quest of light,
In judgments fair and true;
In Aspiration's upward flight,
And Hope's far brightening view;

In quickenings of the life within;
In Duty's earnest call;
In eager spirits seeking truth,—
God speaks in one and all.

There's nothing good or fair in man,
Nor hope, nor faith, nor love,
Nor truth, nor right, nor holiness
But cometh from above!

WILLIAM MITCHELL.

THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

WHEN the same Spirit of Divine love reigns in all hearts, there is true fellowship, and the superficial movements of intellect and will can no more break its harmony than the rustling leaves of a forest can disturb its solemn beauty. The intellect, with its imperfect and limited powers, shapes for itself such Divine images as it can; but, though the same eternal Reason may shine in every soul, we cannot all see it alike, and we interpret it according to the measure of our gift. Our activities are of many sorts, suited to the complex wants of society, and directed by the variety of our natural endowments. But through all there may be the same heavenly Spirit, the same sweet graciousness of temper towards our fellowmen, the same loving devoutness and submission towards God. Here alone can we find the true ground of ecclesiastical unity. We seek it in vain by the pathway of the intellect; for it is the business of the intellect to question, to discuss, to explore, and knowledge is continually passing away while nature delivers up her secrets and we climb to new levels of thought. But the deep life of our common humanity, cleansed and renewed by the Spirit of God, would bind us together into a holy brotherhood, had we not built again the artificial separations which Christ destroyed; for those who adore and love the same Father in heaven must reverence and love one another. Is the time coming when men will once more have sufficient faith to demolish the dividing walls, or is the Pauline benediction to be spoken to listless ears, and Grace, Love, and Holiness to flee far from the habitations of men?

J. DRUMMOND.

PRAYER.

LEAD us, O God, in Thy mercy, through all the clouds of time to behold the light of eternal justice, eternal love, eternal life; and, though we are not worthy of so great a blessing, ever comfort us with the hope that we may grow thereunto. From the strife of tongues gather us into Thy peace, and from the despair of our own hearts lift us into the thought of Thy fatherly goodness. Bless unto us this and every hour of restful meditation, and fit us thereby more perfectly to work for our brethren in all appointed ways. And so bring us at the last unto Thy rest.—AMEN.

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LONDON, APRIL 17, 1897.

EASTER.

THE festival of hope, of joy in the
life of the spirit, comes again upon us
in the midst of the busy cares and
bustling pleasures of this world, and if
it finds us too full of care or of pleasure-
seeking to welcome it, an infinite loss is
ours. For it is precisely the touch of
Easter thought upon our lives that re-
deems the care and hallows the pleasure,
taking from the one its heaviest burden,
and adding to the other a glorifying
benediction. If we are simply phan-
tasms that flash through a period of
consciousness as insects through a sun-
beam, and then go out in darkness, the
troubles of time take on an added sorrow
—the loss of eternity. The mind, as JOHN
FISKE says, is 'put to permanent in-
'tellectual confusion' if no principle of
rational continuity renders coherent the
fitful fever of life. To what purpose is
so much striving, so much pain of struggle
and self-denial, and effort of the mind to
catch the truth, and effort of the soul
towards purity and perfect love? When,
with daily renewed aspiration and patient
growth, the man is emerging from life's
humble beginnings of impulse and desire
into the ordered dignity of a constant
will and a clear intelligence, is he to
snap like a bubble, and all that was
wrought in him be nothing more sub-
stantial than a memory in the minds of
others who, like him, shall be in turn
shivered into nothingness, till earth
grows cold and the whole race has
passed away, leaving not even a memory
behind? That way mere madness lies.
We hold by the sanity of the universe.
Put, with the alternatives before us, to
think so, or to believe in spirit—to trust
God, to place ourselves quietly and con-
fidently in the keeping of Eternal
Love—we choose the latter. With such
a conviction in our hearts, we may say,
with TENNYSON, that our fight with

'wild beasts'—doubt, limitation, and
mischiefs that men work upon each
other, all that we call evil—is 'not in
'vain.' And, when joys visit us, we are
not, in such a case, mocked by the dark
shadow that stands in the background
of every picture of the world that takes
no account of its spiritual meaning. To-
day the spring's profusion grows around
us like a tide. 'No tongue' its 'beauty
'may declare.' But the best of its beauty
is the thought that amid all its fleeting
grace is an abiding graciousness. The
youths and maidens of our homes go out
to the hills and shores, and people the
happy scenes of the land with a happier
promise of the manhood and womanhood
to be. The voices of the birds call the
city-dweller from the chaffering of the
market, and welcome him to that sweet
sanctuary of Nature where the veil is
woven of buds bursting into a haze of
green along the woodland. Rest comes
to the toiler; new projects of life to the
heart conscious of hidden and unused
faculty to do and to be. And the best
of all is that through the manifold glory
that comes and passes there is a greater
glory being revealed wherever the SPIRIT
finds its child. 'The FATHER seeketh
'such to worship Him.'

With this faith in us, the memory of
our beloved, no less beloved because
these eyes see their outward forms no
more, becomes a fountain of the sweetest
hopes—hopes that while they comfort
and sustain, cleanse us and purify us.
The claims of worldly things, the threats
and fines by which men are too often
daunted in the way of duty and sincerity,
have the less power upon us, the more
we meditate on the immortal life. To
hear men speak at times, to observe
their faltering accents though it is truth
that they would tell, to see how they
hesitate and turn and trim and play
tricks with each other and themselves,
and how they let the supreme things of
honour, justice, righteousness fail on the
earth because of their unfaithfulness, one
might think they had a score of lives to
squander instead of one, and one only,
to use well. Surely the worst atheism
is that of the man who, often professing
to believe in God, in the Resurrection,
and the coming of the Judgment Day,
lives really and truly only for the sake
of those things, gold, fame, and worldly
joys, which are confessedly temporal and
must vanish away. Blessed be the day
that brings to us again the reminder that
we, too, are immortal, and bids us 'try
'the wings that beat for our refuge'!
The mistakes we make as to the future
cannot render that future less glorious
than God intends it to be; just as the
mistakes and fancies of tradition have
not robbed from Christendom the risen
CHRIST, nor quenched the power of his
memory to refresh our courage and to
renew our confidence in God's everlast-
ing truth and all-conquering goodness.

DR. MARTINEAU's ninety-second birthday
occurs next Wednesday. We are asked to
say that he will be absent from home on
that date, and to request his many friends
to take this notice in order to save dis-
appointment.

CORRESPONDENCE.

[The Editor is not responsible for the opinions
expressed by correspondents. LETTERS CANNOT BE
INSERTED WITHOUT THE WRITER'S NAME; and all
private information should be accompanied by the
name and address of the sender.]

WHERE ARE WE?

SIR,—I was prevented at the last moment
from attending the Sheffield Conference.
This I deeply regret, although my interest
in it had considerably declined from the
moment it was decided to exclude from
discussion the grave question referred to it
by one of its constituent assemblies; for I
am convinced that such a shrinking from
responsibility must tend disastrously to
weaken the influence of our Triennial Con-
ference with our own churches and to
diminish the respect in which we are held
by other religious bodies.

The President, however, and many others
were strongly opposed to the introduction of
the topic. Let me then, with the most
sincere respect and with the greatest admira-
tion for the spirit of his address, express my
surprise that the President should himself
have been the first to introduce the burning
question to the Conference, and to make a
strong and vigorous pronouncement on the
very points on which he and others so
earnestly deprecated discussion. I and
others may or may not agree in his state-
ment of the position, and his account of the
proper attitude of our churches and of their
relation to Jesus Christ. But the more
nearly we agree with him, the more deeply,
I think, shall we regret that, if he himself
felt called upon to deliver his soul on this
matter, and that officially *ex cathedra*, he
did not use his great influence to obtain for
others the like opportunity, by securing the
admission of the subject on the table of
agenda. As it is, his own utterance will be
taken as a sort of official enunciation on a
topic on which we are by no means agreed,
and of the extent and direction of difference
of opinion concerning which, among
ministers and laymen whose equal qualifica-
tion with his own he will be the first to
admit, we have no means of judging.
Throughout his address Mr. Beard uses the
pronoun 'We'; and he assumes to speak
for us all on matters in relation to which
no such authority has been delegated to him.

But, Sir, I have placed the interrogatory
'Where Are We?' at the head of this letter
with a view to calling attention to another
and much graver matter. In your interest-
ing and spirited contemporary, *The Seed
Sower*, there are at present appearing a
series of papers entitled 'Whitherward?'
The first (in the January number) was from
the trenchant pen of Mr. Jacks. Its main
contention was to the effect that our
churches were in danger of ceasing to be
progressive in their religious ideas, and that
this was due to the religious philosophy
held by Dr. Martineau (with whose name
he did me the great honour of associating
my own), which he conceives to be incapable
of further development except by the denial
of some fundamental religious idea. He did
not attempt to show in Dr. Martineau's
teachings any tendency to deny and
fundamental religious idea; but he suggested
that that was likely to come next. He
pointed out that my little book, 'God and
the Soul,' does not comprise a chapter on
the Immortality of the Soul, and he
appeared to suggest that this indicated that

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

OF

UNITARIAN, LIBERAL CHRISTIAN, FREE CHRISTIAN, PRESBYTERIAN AND OTHER
NON-SUBSCRIBING OR KINDRED CONGREGATIONS.

Sixth Triennial Meeting,

HELD AT SHEFFIELD, APRIL 6-9, 1897.

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LIST OF DELEGATES.

THE National Conference held its sixth triennial meeting at Sheffield, April 6-9 inclusive. One special meeting having been held in addition to the regular triennial meetings, this year's was the seventh gathering of the delegates. The list of representatives was as follows :—

The Revs. E. S. Anthony (Poole), E. Allen (Bolton), A. Amey (Framlingham), H. Austin (Cirencester), W. E. Addis (Nottingham), D. Agate (Chorlton-cum-Hardy), W. Agar (Leicester), A. Ashworth (Belfast), W. E. Atack (Manchester), F. Allen (Chatham), J. D. Barnhill (Maidstone), S. Burrows (Dover), E. C. Bennett (Weymouth), G. Boros (Hungary), T. B. Broadrick (Bridgwater), J. Birks (Derby), J. Boughey (Leigh), W. C. Bowie (London), J. W. Bishop (Manchester), C. D. Badland (Bristol), J. W. Braithwaite (Nottingham), J. H. Bibby (Downpatrick), W. H. Burgess

(Manchester), R. Balmforth (Huddersfield), S. S. Brettell (Crewkerne), E. P. Barrow (Manchester), A. Bennett (Chesterfield), S. A. Brooke (London), A. Chalmers (Wakefield), J. E. Carpenter (Oxford), H. Clarke (Godalming), C. C. Coe (Bournemouth), J. M. Connell (Newbury), B. C. Constable (Stockport), W. J. Clarke (Birmingham), W. G. Cadman (London), A. A. Charlesworth (Birmingham), W. A. Clarke (Newchurch), J. H. L. Christien (Manchester), J. Crossley (Birkenhead), A. H. Dolphin (Manchester), J. T. Davis (Devonport), D. Davis (Southampton), J. Drummond (Oxford), P. Dean (Walsall), V. D. Davis (Cheshire), W. H. Drummond (Warrington), E. M. Daplyn (Norwich), W. J. Davies (Belfast), J. Ellis (Sheffield), E. D. P. Evans (Kidderminster), W. H. Eastlake (Idle), T. E. M. Edwards (London), G. Evans (Gorton), J. Forrest (Manchester), T. W. Freckelton (Northampton), E. I. Frigg (Belfast), A. W. Fox (Cheshire), J. Fox (Leeds), J. Felstead (Cheshire), J. A. Fallows (Guildford), J. B. Gardner (Selby), N. Green (Mottram), Dr. Griffiths (Pontypridd), H. Gow (Leicester), J. Geary (South Shields), J. H. Green (Huddersfield), R. T. Herford (Manchester), J. Harrison (Preston), J. C. Hirst (Altrincham), W. Harrison (Stalybridge), C. Hargrove (Leeds), J. Hall (Crumlin), Dr. Herford (London), W. Holmshaw (London), W. G. Hope (Dewsbury), C. A. Hoddinott (Chichester), E. R. Hodges (Newark), A. M. Holden (Ilminster), A. Henderson (Manchester), P. M. Higginson (Monton), J. Howard (Tamworth), U. V. Herford (South Devon), H. W. Hawkes (Liverpool), A. Harvie (Manchester), H. E. Haycock (Loughborough), R. Hill (Bedford), W. Harris (Manchester), E. A. Hillier (Deal), H. L. Haigh (Liverpool), E. D. Hicks (Exeter), E. C. Jones (Bradford), T. L. Jones (Liverpool), R. L. Jones (Aberdare), L. P. Jacks (Birmingham), W. Jellie (Ipswich), L. J. Jones (Woolwich), J. A. Kelly (Dunmurry), A. Lazenby (Glasgow), E. W. Lummis (West Bromwich), H. M. Livens (Bolton), R. Lyttle (Moneyrea), R. H. Lambley (Glossop), W. H. Lambelle (Middlesbrough), A. Lancaster (Manchester), T. Leyland (Colne), J. B. Lloyd (Liverpool), T. L. Marshall (London), J. S. Mathers (Plymouth), J. E. Manning (Sheffield), P. Moore (Carmarthen), W. Mason (Leigh), J. McDowell (Leeds), H. V. Mills (Kendal), J. M. Mills (Nantwich), J. Moore (Hindley), A. J. Marchant (Deptford), W. Mellor (York), J. H. Matthews (Birmingham), H. McKean

(Oldbury), F. E. Millson (Halifax), J. E. Odgers (Oxford), J. C. Odgers (Bury), A. E. Parry (Kirkcaldy), C. Peach (Manchester), I. Payne (Stannington), W. J. Phillips (Newton), P. Prime (Torquay), H. W. Perris (Hull), E. Parry (Todmorden), W. G. Price (Hinckley), G. H. Payne (Knutsford), G. Pegler (Glasgow), J. Pollard (London), S. G. Preston (Hastings), J. C. Pollard (Lancaster), H. S. Perris (Liverpool), J. A. Pearson (Oldham), W. C. Pope (London), H. Rawlings (London), C. Roper (Manchester), T. Robinson (Swansea), J. Ruddle (Accrington), H. D. Roberts (Chester), J. Ride (Chorley), E. T. Russell (Padiham), W. Reynolds (Ainsworth), W. W. Robinson (Gainsborough), R. S. Redfern (Crows), T. P. Spedding (Rochdale), A. C. Smith (Burnley), R. C. Smith (Buxton), W. Stephens (Rotherham), C. J. Street (Bolton), G. Street (Manchester), J. C. Street (Birmingham), S. H. Street (Manchester), H. S. Solly (Bridport), S. A. Steinthal (Manchester), J. E. Stronge (London), A. Shelley (Dudley), W. R. Shanks (Manchester), G. St. Clair (Cardiff), R. Spears (London), F. Summers (London), F. W. Stanley (Bath), A. L. Smith (Liverpool), J. K. Smith (Belper), H. B. Smith (Liverpool), G. H. Smith (Congleton), W. R. Smyth (Great Yarmouth), J. G. Slater (Pudsey), W. G. Tarrant (London), H. Thomas (Doncaster), S. Thompson (Chorley), E. L. H. Thomas (Scarborough), W. L. Tucker (Manchester), F. Taylor (Tenterden), H. S. Tayler (Manchester), C. Travers (Carlisle), A. Turner (Ireland), J. Taylor (Elkland), A. W. Timmis (Stourbridge), J. Thomas (Aberdare), P. Timmins (London), E. Turland (Manchester), C. Thrift (Ireland), H. Thomas (Doncaster), G. H. Vance (Dublin), L. Williams (Talsarn), C. H. Well-beloved (Southport), P. H. Wicksteed (London), J. Wood (Birmingham), J. H. Weatherall (Darlington), D. Walmsley (Belfast), S. F. Williams (London), H. Williamson (Dundee), D. J. Williams (Merthyr Tydvil), J. M. Whiteman (Eastbourne), F. Walters (Newcastle-on-Tyne), A. Wilson (London), J. J. Wright (Atherton).

Messrs. J. F. Allen (Manchester), N. Anderton (Liverpool), H. Albinson (Manchester), J. R. Beard (Manchester), John Bull (Weymouth), J. M. Bass (Manchester), Blakemore (Walsall), F. Bullock (Derby), C. Beard (Glossop), W. T. Bushrod (Southampton), John Birks (Manchester), A. A. Birkmyre (Belfast), H. Blessley (Portsmouth), Dr. J. Blurton (Nottingham), W. Bowring (Liverpool), E. Chitty

(Dover), H. Coventry (Liverpool), W. C. Clennell (London), J. C. Conway (Ringwood), E. Capleton (London), J. Chambers (Ballee, Ireland), E. Coventry (London), H. Chatfield Clarke (London), G. T. Cook (Manchester), J. Close (Chester), G. Callow (Lewisham), T. Cocker (Rotherham), E. H. Coysh (Newcastle), J. Dendy (Manchester), Davison (Manchester), D. Davies (Gateshead), T. Dorman (Oldham), J. D. Donald (Newcastle), E. Ellis (Guildford), C. Fenton (London), J. Ferencz (Hungary), H. Freeston (Nottingham), S. Firth (Heywood), J. Friends (South Shields), M. Jackson (Rochdale), J. Graham (Glasgow), T. Gilbert (Leicester), P. Golloway (London), W. Gibson (Ireland), M. Godfrey (Frenchay), J. Garnett (Manchester), S. A. Gittins (Nottingham), T. H. Gordon (Dukinfield), C. Grundy (Blackpool), W. Greenwood (Blackpool), C. Harding (Birmingham), T. Hardman (Hindley), J. Halstead (Burnley), T. Hodgkinson (Flagg), H. B. Holding (London), J. S. Harding (Nantwich), E. C. Harding (Manchester), J. Hartley (Colne), J. Harwood (Woodsleigh), F. Holland (Padiham), J. Hooper (London), W. S. Hall (Manchester), A. Hall (Oxford), E. Jonathan (Talsarn), J. J. Jordan (Stockport), H. H. Johnson (Liverpool), T. Knott (Woolwich), J. Kerfoot (Manchester), W. Kirk (Coventry), G. L. Knight (Selby), J. T. Kitchen (Apperley Bridge), D. Little (Bowdon), R. Lamb (Kendal), G. Laidler (Newcastle), S. Lee (Preston), J. Livesey (Manchester), E. B. Lupton (Leeds), H. B. Melville (Kirkcaldy), H. J. Morton (Scarborough), J. Montgomery (Belfast), D. Martineau (London), R. J. S. Mummery (London), E. A. Maley (Birmingham), J. S. Mathers (Leeds), J. Mawson (Darlington), George Miller (Bedford), W. E. Nansen (Manchester), A. Nicholson (Sale), W. H. Nightingale (Birmingham), G. Nicholson (Stockton-on-Tees), J. H. Nicholson (Cheshire), H. New (Birmingham), Roland New (Birkenhead), F. Pincock (Newport), H. E. Perry (Wolverhampton), G. Philpott (Taunton), P. Preston (London), I. Pritchard (London), J. Pilcher (Manchester), G. E. Quirk (Eastbourne), W. Robinson (Manchester), Ross (Manchester), Rylands (Manchester), Ald. Rawson (Manchester), J. Roberts (Leigh), H. Stannus (London), Schroder (Manchester), Shakespeare (Manchester), S. E. Smith (Loughborough), Alderman J. Saunders (Newark), G. Stott (Halifax), F. C. Slater (Newcastle), A. Slater (Hyde), J. G. Speed (Dundee), Stirling (Sunderland), J. Sale (Northampton), J. H. Shaw (Wareham), W. H. Sutcliffe (Chorley), R. Sowerby (Carlisle), Promatha Lal Sen (Oxford), J. H. Thornton (Birmingham), J. Toothill (Ainsworth), J. M. Taylor (Blackpool), E. C. Theadam (Dudley), Grosvenor Talbot (Leeds), J. Thompson (Pudsey), W. F. Turland (Bradwell), G. L. L. Thomas (Merthyr Tydvil), W. H. Tozer (West Bromwich), J. Thorpe (Holmfirth), W. J. B. Tranter (Birmingham), Urmosy (Hungary), A. Vickers (Stannington), Vaughan (Manchester), A. W. Worthington (Stourbridge), J. Wigley (Salford), T. F. Ward (Middlesbrough), C. Woollen (Sheffield), A. Wilson (London), A. Whitworth (Huddersfield), White (Manchester), Worthington (Manchester), Warhurst (Stalybridge), G. Webster (Wakefield), N. W. Woodward (Atherton), C. Wilkinson (Buxton), W. Wadsworth (Todmorden), Ward (Manchester), L. N. Williams (Aberdare), W. Warwick (Lancaster), D. Wilson (Hull), A. Whittle (Warrington), J. Warschauer (Leicester), W. Whitaker (Leeds).

The following associations, etc., were represented at the Conference:—The Unitarian Churches of Hungary; London and South-Eastern Counties Provincial Assembly; South Wales Unitarian Association; Central Postal Mission; The Presbyterian Board (London); British and Foreign Unitarian Association; Northumberland and Durham Unitarian Association; Unitarian Home Missionary College (Manchester); Yorkshire Unitarian Union; The Unitarian Institute (Liverpool); Sunday School Association (London); Midland Christian Union (Birmingham); North-East Lancashire Sunday School Union; Lay Preachers' Association (London); Western Unitarian Union; Southern Unitarian Association; East Cheshire Christian Union; North Cheshire Sunday School Union.

TUESDAY'S MEETING.

RECEPTION.

The proceedings began at the Montgomery Hall, where afternoon tea was served to friends assembling, and at four the President, Mr. J. R. BEARD, gave his opening address and welcome to the foreign delegates. There was a large audience.

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS.

The PRESIDENT said:—

In opening this, the seventh, National Conference of Unitarian, Liberal Christian, Free Christian, Presbyterian, and other Non-subscribing and kindred congregations, I must very briefly acknowledge the great honour done to me by appointing me its President. I am aware that I owe this honour chiefly to the services rendered to the cause of reverent free thought and spiritual religion by my father, the Rev. Dr. Beard, and my brother, the Rev. Dr. Charles Beard, and, highly as I appreciate the honourable position in which you have placed me, I thank you still more for the recognition of their unwearied and unselfish labours in the highest interests of humanity. We stand here to-day representing some 400 churches, colleges, and societies bearing various names, having different historical origins, and yet all alike in the liberty which brooks no credal restrictions, no priestly bonds, but gives free access to the workings of the Holy Spirit in the soul of man. We call ourselves severally Unitarians, Liberal Christians, Free Christians, or Presbyterians, but we are all one in this, that we own the authority of neither priest nor creed, neither synod nor council, we inherit or build our churches under no doctrinal trust, and our doors are open to all who may desire to join us in religious communion and worship. And, while we exclude none, we find an all-sufficient bond of union among ourselves in the worship of God our Father and the realisation of the Christian life. The greatest of our living leaders—he who has been for many years a well-spring of spiritual inspiration to the best minds of the age, whether within or without our churches—Dr. Martineau, at Leeds, said: 'We are and always have been a fellowship devoted to the worship of God and the service of man in the spirit and faith of Jesus Christ.' And though there be many who deny us the Christian name and shut us out from common Christian work, they cannot control the spirit of Christ, which leads us to the feet of the Almighty, as for 2000 years it has always lead his humble followers. We do not, it is true, 'acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ as the only begotten son of God, now living and reigning with the Father and Holy Ghost as one God'; but neither do we regard him only as a good man taking rank with Socrates, Sakya Muni, Confucius, and Epictetus. Dr. Munro Gibson is right in one point of the antithesis which a few weeks ago he put before the Council of Evangelical Free Churches, but not in the other. Christ is to us like all men as far

as regards his human nature, but spiritually he ranks so far above all that his nearness to God is more apparent to us than his essential humanity. As was well said in one of our journals a short time ago: 'His divineness is the highwater mark of the uprising tides of human nature,' a mark to which none other has ever attained.

But, while affirming the essentially Christian character of the churches represented in this Conference, I think we must admit the truth of Dr. Munro Gibson's statement as to the importance of the differences between us and those for whom he speaks. We may minimise those differences so far as they mar religious sympathy, but we must emphasise them so far as they mark divine truth. Though for us divergence in doctrinal opinion forms no barrier to religious communion, it is quite otherwise with those who hold a credal religion, and we ought to recognise their different standpoint, and, wishing them God speed in their noble efforts to bring on earth the kingdom of heaven, be content, even in obloquy and exclusion, to maintain our loyalty to what we believe to be divine truth and humbly to work for the same great end.

Somewhat more than enough has been made in this connection of the action of those among us who have recently shown the catholicity of their religious sympathies by admitting to fellowship one who did not, as we do, avow Christ as master, guide and exemplar; and this has been alleged against them as inconsistent with their Christian profession. Nay, it has been alleged as a proof against the right of all in our churches to call themselves Christians. We, who know these men and know, too, how consonant are their Christian profession and practice, know that it is no such proof. There is a great deal of difference between breadth of religious sympathy and identity of doctrinal conviction. I am one who dissents from the course these gentlemen have taken, and yet it seems to me that it was not that they honoured Christ less, but that they believed in freedom more, than we who differ from them in this matter. Versed in the history of our churches, they had seen, in the stimulating and fructifying light of freedom, a moribund and inoperative faith in Christ renewed in strength and vigour, and become a glowing reality touching the soul with grace, the tongue with fire, the life to Christian achievement. As when planes of gold and iron are bound close together, the nobler metal rises and permeates the baser, so they had confidence in the precious truths and influences of Christianity rising triumphant through the sterner verities of a purely Theistic faith. There is, no doubt, an incongruity between the religious bases of Christian and non-Christian Theists which it may be difficult or impracticable to reconcile. But, though this is not an ecclesiastical court in which our friends may be arraigned and defended, still in view of the false deductions which have been drawn from their action, we may, while each reserving his own individual opinion as to the advisability of their proceedings, recognise that, rightly or wrongly, they are based on principles to which our churches owe their existence, and which command our sympathy and adhesion. It is also common to the constituent churches of this Conference that they look for progressive development in divine truth, for a fuller knowledge, a deeper insight into the nature, laws, and purposes of our Heavenly Father. The history of human thought forbids us to believe that a full and final revelation was once delivered to the saints, and that it is our duty to confine our aspirations within the limits then reached. We see the human mind growing in range and power as the heirs of all the ages reap the rich harvest of past experience and effort. We see the ascent of man from lower to ever higher planes of achievement. We note the enormous advance which has been made since the dawn of history in man's conception of the Deity; and we have faith that the future holds for us more, infinitely more, than the past, as mankind becomes more worthy of a fuller revelation.

We cannot all re-echo the words of Lessing: 'If God should hold out to me in His right hand all truth, and in His left hand the ever active desire to seek truth, though with the

condition of perpetual error, I would humbly ask for the contents of the left hand.' It is the fashion of the day to be fascinated by paradox, but it seems to me that such a choice would be as though one were to prefer an insatiable hunger to a wholesome meal. The spiritual nomad does little to cultivate the garden of God. It is in the assimilation rather than in the pursuit of divine truth that the soul is nurtured. But we confidently hold that every revelation of goodness, truth, and beauty so made our own as to vitalise the current of our existence, every noble ideal realised, every step towards moral and spiritual perfection, forms but a vantage ground from which we may reach still nearer the Almighty, until in the issue of the ages we come within the veil and know even as also we are known.

And this Conference meets in no antagonism to other churches, or to that vast majority of men and women who belong to no church at all. We look for no salvation by virtue of any theological opinion, but for an ever nearer approach to God through humble worship, Christian self-sacrifice, and righteousness of life. But we dare not, therefore, assume to ourselves any superiority over those of our brethren who cling to the formulas, creeds, and ceremonies in which they and their fathers have found aids to faith. We follow that which is to us a better way, without contending that no other can lead to the desired goal. And, while we humbly but steadfastly maintain our own right to the Christian name, and look to Christ as the Revealer and Saviour, we above all things rejoice to know that neither the iron barriers of a stern Calvinism, nor the priestly interdictions of sacerdotalism, nor the intellectual assumptions of a purely ethical culture, nor even the many frailties of human nature, can limit the power of his grace or hinder his spirit from its appointed work in leading his brethren to the loving bosom of his Father and our Father, his God and our God.

It is, then, to such a Conference as I have described it—a Conference reverent, Christian, free, progressive, open on all sides to the inspiration of God, to the breath of human sympathy—it is to such a Conference that I now welcome the foreign delegates.

And, first, I must voice the extreme regret of this Conference at the absence from our meeting of Bishop Ferencz, of Transylvania, the eloquent orator, the beloved pastor, the dignified head of the oldest Unitarian community in the world. Bishop Ferencz writes that nothing could have been more in accordance with the desire of his heart than to have been with us to-day, but having been in infirm health during the whole of the winter, he finds himself unable to undertake so long a journey, which causes him greater regret than he is able to express. We join him cordially in that regret, for it would have been a great privilege to have held communion with one who is no less renowned for his spiritual gifts than for his eloquence and learning. We rejoice, however, to welcome a representative of the Hungarian Church in the Rev. George Boros, who, as a former alumnus of Manchester College, will find many old friends as well as new ones amongst us; also Mr. E. Urmösy, member of the Consistory; Mr. Ferencz, son of Bishop Ferencz; and Mr. Pramatha Lal Sen, representing the Brahmo Somaj of India.

And in welcoming you to this Conference, I would briefly point out to you the extreme fitness of our place of meeting. Sheffield to this extent benefited by our English Black Bartholomew's Day, that, not being at that time a corporate town, it was one of the few places of any consideration in which the ejected clergy could take up their abode. The vicar of Sheffield at that time, Mr. James Fisher, was one of those sufferers for conscience' sake, and when he quitted the parish church of this town, he for several years conducted religious worship in secret for the benefit of a number of his parishioners, and was no doubt assisted from time to time by Richard Taylor, Nathaniel Baxter, and Robert Durant, who, like himself, had been ejected from their livings, and resided in Sheffield. In 1678 this congregation began to hold religious services in public, and in 1700 the chapel, where we shall shortly meet, was

founded. The trust deed simply dedicates it to 'the worship and service of Almighty God.' Since that time the Upper Chapel has been a beneficent and regenerating influence in the town of Sheffield. Its ministers have been conspicuous in furthering educational, social, and political progress. Its people have been among the most useful citizens and the more prominent benefactors of the community. In the pure and stimulating air of freedom, they have faced the dawn and welcomed new light and truth as they rose in sight, until to-day they stand the worthy hosts of a Conference pledged to no theological formulas, no foregone conclusions, but only to the worship of God and the realisation of the Christian ideal.

The Rev. G. BOROS, in replying on behalf of the Hungarians, referred in terms of the deepest reverence and affection to Bishop Ferencz, whose regrets at compelled absence he conveyed. He introduced to the audience a son of the bishop, as the 'Joseph Ferencz of the future.' He also introduced Mr. Urmösy, another of his Unitarian countrymen. For himself, he regarded England as his second fatherland. It was here that he was born again; and, among his spiritual fathers, he referred especially to Dr. Martineau, whose full influence on the world was yet to come. Speaking in the name of nearly 70,000 Hungarian Unitarians, he heartily thanked them for their welcome.

To the National Conference of Unitarian, Liberal Christian, Free Christian, Presbyterian, and other non-subscribing or kindred Congregations the Hungarian Unitarians tender their warmest brotherly Greetings.

Dear Christian Brethren,—We Hungarian Unitarians were greatly honoured by the kind invitation which you sent to the Right Rev. Bishop Joseph Ferencz to preach at the Sheffield National Conference to be held on the 6th and following days of April. To our sincere sorrow the Bishop was unable to go to the Conference on account of his feeble health, but we felt it as a pleasant duty to send deputies to represent us at your grand triennial gathering.

We have much pleasure to recommend to your kind and brotherly feeling as our deputies the Reverend George Boros, Professor in the Kolozsvár Theological College, Secretary to our Consistory, Editor of the Unitarian Magazine, and former Student of Manchester College; Mr. Eugen Urmösy, Esq., member of our Consistory, who belongs to a very old and zealous Unitarian family, himself also being a faithful member of our Church.

Our deputies shall express personally the warm brotherly greetings of our Church; we do heartily wish for your important National Conference all good success.

May God's blessings be upon all your doings and upon all your noble intentions.

From the Consistory of the Hungarian Unitarians held at Kolozsvár on the 10th of March.

Cordially yours,

JOSEPH FERENCZ,
Bishop of the Unitarian Churches in Hungary.

ANDREW MOZES,
My. H. Secretary to the Consistory.

Dear Christian Brethren,—With the heartiest joy do we send our greetings to you, Brethren in the Common Faith, on the joyful occasion of your meeting together in a National Conference.

It would have been our greatest pleasure to send our own representative among you, to bear personal testimony of the deep affection which we feel towards our English and American brethren, but our present circumstances do not allow us this favour. So we have entrusted the task of representing our Church Community to Mr. G. Boros, the representative of the Hungarian Unitarian Consistory, and are persuaded that his other mission will not diminish in his eyes the importance of our trust. For if Hungarian Unitarianism owes a deep gratitude to you in coming to aid in one of its sorest trials, when the existence of its schools and public education was in peril; if it has to be thankful for affording

even now the means of a higher theological education to our students to the ministry; all this goodwill and practical kindness has been for a body, which, during 330 years, with poor and limited means, fought its battle bravely and brought Unitarianism to our better days, the most precious traditions of liberty of faith and liberty of conscience. In this case you have shown your sympathy with an old institution, which has fulfilled its mission and proved itself worthy of life in having kept up free thought in dark days of tyranny and bigotry. Life was already there, it had only to be stimulated in its higher development. But we owe, in a great measure, our very birth to you. You were at the cradle of our church, and its successes during its 75 years' existence are due in a great part to your material and spiritual help. The brotherly triple alliance of England, America and Transylvania gave birth to a little Unitarian community in Hungary's Capital, and as long as it survives the memory of its origin will not be forgotten by us.

With great pleasure we had seen several of you last year taking part in the International Unitarian Conference. This personal intercommunication has greatly heightened the sympathy which, through the identity of our common faith and common religious truths, has already existed. And we believe that now, when our representatives are returning your call at your National Conference, this circumstance may be the source of even further and more intimate connections for the future.

Be your Conference a means for the spread of reverent free thought and pure faith. We follow with the deepest interest your unceasing work in the cause of our common truths, and are glad that the light of a freer religious spirit is fast spreading in your country. God's blessing and help be with you and with your work. Our brotherly greetings to the several Associations assembled in a National Conference.

Yours faithfully,
(Seal).

Judge of the Highest Court of Appeal,
2nd President of the Church.

ALBERTAS BEDO,
Secretary of State, Ip. Member of Parliament,
1st President of the Church.

NICHOLAS GAL,
Minister of the Church.

Budapesth, 20th March, 1897.

To the National Conference of Unitarian and
Liberal Christian Congregations, Sheffield.

Mr. PRAMATHA LAL SEN also briefly returned thanks, and the opening meeting then terminated.

COMMUNION SERVICE.

Between four and five hundred delegates and friends attended the opening service, which, as at previous Conferences, was a communion service. The Rev. Dr. HERFORD conducted, and gave an address full of deep and tender thought, emphasising the bond supplied for all Christians everywhere in the simple rite they were observing. The service was very impressive. The address is given in full in THE INQUIRER, April 17, 1897.

PUBLIC SERVICE.

Following the communion service, public worship took place. Owing largely, no doubt, to the celebrity of the preacher announced there was a vast congregation, the members of which had been admitted strictly by ticket till just before the opening. The hymns included a version of Bishop Heber's 'Holy, Holy, Holy,' Mr. Dendy Agate's 'O Thou to whom our voices rise,' and Oliver Wendell Holmes's 'Our Father, while our hearts unlearn.' The musical portion of the service was under the direction of Mr. Stevenson, assisted by a choir from Upperthorpe, and was well done. The Rev. C. WELLBELOVED conducted the devotional portion.

THE REV. STOPFORD BROOKE'S SERMON.

The Rev. STOPFORD BROOKE, who was also the Conference preacher in 1891, at London, delivered the following sermon, taking for his text the words,—

'The Kingdom of God is within you.'

THERE is one question which occurs to every minister in church and sect, to every interested member of a congregation, to all who, not yet attending public worship, care for the progress of religion. It is this: 'Is there any general statement, even law, which may be laid down with regard to the best way of preaching, and the main subject of preaching?' If that were possible, it would be an equal good for minister and congregation, for those who speak and those who hear, and it would apply to the case of all the teachers and congregations, in every religious body, over the whole world.

The main subject of preaching is the human heart of man, and the human heart of God, and their natural relation of love to one another. All that belongs to love, of man to man, of man to God, of God to man—that is the main subject. And the best way of speaking of it is always to keep close to Nature—to the common, simple, universal outgoings of the very heart of man.

Of course, there would naturally be exceptions to this, or what would seem exceptions. When a crisis in public affairs occurs, such as now meets us in the policy of the Government to Crete, or in the question of education, a crisis which involves the principles of freedom and justice on which our national life is founded, it would be wrong not to speak of it in the pulpit, as the Prophets of Israel spoke. When a crisis in theological thought occurs, or in social movements towards a nobler life for the people, we must speak directly and unmistakably; but even in these crises, we speak chiefly because below the political, economical, or intellectual points concerned there lies in these questions that which impassionates the human heart, which has to do with our love of man and our love of God, the mover of men.

And there are times, also, perhaps every year, when it is wise to preach sermons on matters of doctrine or practice seen from the standpoint of the intellect alone, on matters of theological history or ceremony, academic sermons which tell us how to analyse and formulate our faith, how to wring the laws of religious development out of the history of religion. They are exceptions which the rule allows, provided the rule is obeyed; and they are wisely kept distinct from the sermon, in sets of lectures or courses, because there is a great danger lest the minister and the congregation may come to like them so well that they may cease to care about the emotions of the human heart, or the aspirations of the human soul, and even altogether to ignore that spiritual and ideal life in God which lies beyond the regions alike of the intellect and of the conscience. And then religion decays, and the church where this kind of discourse forms the rule thins away into vanity and emptiness.

As exceptions, then, they are useful, even needful; but the bread and meat, the water and wine, the air and light of the pulpit and the church, from week to week and year to year; that by which minister and people live and move and have their being; by which they grow in power and in unity; by which they

extend their force beyond themselves, and draw the outward world to them—is the continuous preaching of the human heart of men and of the human heart of God, of the doings of human nature which kindle emotion and imagination, and of those deep desires for the invisible and the absolute, in which men most feel their brotherhood to men and their immortal kindred with a God who loves them. The natural feelings in which all men share, and in which we believe God shares, in which even the animals partly share, the universal, common loves and sorrows, joys and aspirations of the impassioned soul, and their working in human life—there is the main region of our work, the foundation, the building, the furniture and the ornament of it.

There is only one day in the week in which this vital business can be done, publicly, by the human heart speaking to other hearts with the force of personality. Why should we use up that day, and shirk its special work, in essays, lectures, discourses, which belong to other realms than the realm where God and the soul embrace, where the heart of man meets with the immense humanity to which it belongs?

The world in which we live is a sorely troubled world, full of woeful sins and their desolate results, torn with sorrows, terrible with inward and silent battles. The men and women who sit below the minister, the minister himself, the million souls who belong to no congregation—if we could but look within upon the world of their hearts, on the labours of their spirit—are, for the most part, tossed in storms of trouble, crying for light and peace, battling desperately against wrong, stretching forth their hands to God, or vainly longing for a sight of Him. And when, on one day in the week, we come, freed from the outward, to hear our brother's voice speak to the inner life, we want to listen to something which touches our own trouble and the vast trouble of the world. We want to hear how we can forget rightly our sins and get rid of them, how God can help us, how we can conquer our sorrows and get their good, how we can love, and how we are loved, and how the inevitable pain of our brothers can be relieved. We want to be told of joy and sympathy and comfort, of the powers of love with us in the fierce warfare which we cannot escape. This is the voiceless cry which goes up Sunday after Sunday from congregated human hearts all over the world. What have we to say to it?

We live in a world of controversy. Day by day, week by week, we are divided into parties that war with one another, denouncing, battering, even hating each other, as we contend about political, social, economical, literary, theological, and scientific questions—obscure, unsettled questions of the intellect. The press is filled with this work; our daily life from Sunday to Sunday, our social meetings, are filled with it. Fighting and noise and obscurity and complexity beset us, and it is all but impossible to hear the still voices, or to breathe the air of the fresh infinite, or to touch the quiet of God, or to sit among the mother-thoughts of the universe.

So, wearied, we want on one day, at least, to escape from this; to feel what love and gentleness and tolerance mean; to forget that we are men of a party, and to remember that we are men and brothers; to get into the deep quiet that lies at the heart of things, and to touch what is simple and easy to be understood and childlike to feel;

what belongs to poor and rich, to learned and unlearned, to the child and the old man, to the one universal human heart which flows deep below the surface of life, that surface ruffled so fiercely by the winds of our parties and our problems, crossed so incessantly by the ships which bear our vain and quarrelling and impermanent desires. These are the things we want, as we meet on Sunday—rest and love and peace, no controversy, things for the soul that are simple, things that endure. A voiceless cry goes up for them from the congregated hearts of the world. What have we got to say to it?

We live in a world of steady commonplace. All the week long we are at business, in the midst of money-making, and law, and trade; shut up in material things from morn to afternoon, or drifting in idleness from club to club, from amusement to amusement, tied to the heavy chariots of society. Beyond ourselves, our class, our commerce, speculation, and entertainment, we have, for the time, few thoughts or hopes. All is of the world, of the visible, the transient, and the material. A great deal of our pursuit of knowledge keeps us close to the material, and even our art and literature are often turned into matters of money and success in the world.

Yet he would have a false view of human nature who imagined that this is all that it desires. Below, deep below all this self-interested and outside life, even in those most enslaved by it, the soul aspires. It seeks the perfect, the love and beauty which are eternal, the invisible things of God, the world in which all the vain realities of the earth are as dust and ashes, the hopes and faiths which are unprovable but felt and loved, the creations of the pure imagination which eye hath not seen nor ear heard. In spite of all the tyranny of the material, the soul 'follows the gleam'; the ideal lifts its glittering head above the turbid waters of the real, and claims to be the veritable real.

In nourishing and in kindling this infinite outgoing of the soul is the salvation of persons and societies, of nations, and of the whole world. We want it spoken to and encouraged, at least once a week; we want to hear of things which have nothing to do with money, and business, and fashion, with the course of the world that passes away; we want to touch the life of God, the ideal hopes and desires of the spirit, the eternal love, the ineffable beauty, the righteousness which is never satisfied with itself, the absolute self-forgetfulness. On one day, at least, let us be drawn upwards into the light which never was on sea or land, into the country where the spirit is at home, and walks, a happy guest, with the great ideas. A voiceless cry for this help goes up from overwhelmed men and women, overwhelmed by the pressure of the material world! What have we to say to it?

To satisfy, even to speak to, these cries is not an easy thing to do. It is ten times easier to write essays on subjects of art, of literature, of history, of sociology, of science, of ethical matters, of theological doctrine; and, indeed, these discourses have their use and place. But the other—to speak home to the soul troubled with temptation, sin, and sorrow; to get down to the simple foundations of the universe, where is quiet, and where love lets us loose from controversy; to find and manifest the ideals which answer to the deepest powers in the hiding places of human nature—this is not

easy; it is so difficult that it is continually evaded. Nor, indeed, are men prepared for it. The education given in all the schools of the country, in colleges and in universities, takes no note of these things. It is almost wholly intellectual, scientific, and critical. The world-tendency, at the present moment, puts these things of the inner life of the heart and spirit aside, and dwells altogether on that which is to be seen and proved, on the matters which can be analysed by the intellect, and put into successful practice by our capacities for business. It is difficult, in the midst of this, to speak to the wants and passions of the soul in man; but it is a difficulty which ought to be faced and conquered, and which the whole world, before long, will be grateful to men for having conquered.

As I say, the task is not easy, nor is its preparation. It needs a knowledge of human nature, a knowledge hard to attain; a knowledge one can scarcely begin to attain till our education is over; a knowledge which must be pursued with undying eagerness and sympathy all our lives long—and it needs that, day by day, as this knowledge grows, we should take it with us to the throne of God, and bind it up with Him who is the source of human nature, so that we should never think of man, or speak of man, without thinking of God and speaking of God, or never think or speak of God without thinking and speaking of man.

To believe in this way in God, and to try to know the infinite personalities of human nature; to have enough imagination to see face to face the trouble of humanity; to love and understand its good, and through its good its evil; to hear the vast travail of the race working out, through sorrow and sin, through its passions for rest and for the perfect, the new, humanity which is to be; to penetrate below the surface of life, and there to watch, and help in, the battles of the individual soul; to feel with all the universal and common passions; to get down to the parent laws on which the human soul is built, and to which all the amazing variety of human nature can be referred—this is the difficult task of the teacher who would be a power for good in the hands of God; and he cannot do it by his intellect. It must be done by long trained love and by steady self-forgetfulness, by earnest faith in man as the child of God, and in God as the Father of man.

We learn that knowledge slowly, letter by letter, word by word, but to preach it lovingly as we learn it and to hear it wisely—there is the moving power, the inspiration, the art by which the world is helped, comforted, made alive and joyful, and regenerated; and when the fire of prophecy is cold, and the impulses which set spiritual mankind forward have lost their spring, when criticism has taken the place of literature, and metrical science the place of poetry, and ethical, intellectual, doctrinal and ritualistic discourses have driven the true sermon from the pulpit,—it is only by a return to Nature, to the heart of man, to the spirit of God in him, to that with which science and criticism and the powers of the intellect have nothing to do, to that which leaves ethics behind and soars into the region of divine love, that the art of prophecy and poetry and preaching will be again made vital, powerful, new and glorious.

I might give from history a hundred instances of such regeneration, but two will be enough. When the art of painting was

dead, or had nothing in it to move itself or the world, one man, the scholar of another who had vaguely begun the work, brought it back to nature. Giotto, full of the passion of humanity, restored his art and set it into centuries of movement, by returning to the simple and vivid representation of the common feelings of the heart. He painted motherhood and childhood and wrote their emotions on the face. He painted the adoration of the soul, the bitter sorrows of loss, the rapture of the spirit rising to God, the simple loves and faiths of human nature. Even when he was most symbolic, he was close to nature. Men read clearly what he meant, and rejoiced in it. They drank again of the ancient springs, they felt the life of the world beating in his pictures. His whole society rose around him in excitement and delight; and his art became a power of life. Fire was brought to men. As it were out of nothing, a host of new creators rose.

When poetry in England had become critical and didactic, and in it imagination and passion had died, when it only spoke to a cultured class of men, and these only asked of it fine phrases of the critical intellect, how did it once more pour forth fresh waters from the living rock and quench the thirst of the weary pilgrims of eternity? It went back to sing of the common woes and common love of mankind, of the faith and hopes of common men, of motherhood and sweet-hearting, 'of joy in widest commonality spread,' of all the universal emotions of the human heart. It sang of the simplicities of the flowers and birds, of the clouds and waters of the earth in contact with the heart of man, of the silent influences which flow day by day from the common works of God into the souls of the ignorant and the wise, of the shepherd and the king. The new birth slowly grew—a few poets began it, and touched some of the chords of this living harp of common nature. At last Wordsworth came, and smote, like the desert chief of old, the rock, and poetry was reborn. All the great singing of this century traces its living waters back to him. Poets rose out of the impulse that he gave in a rejoicing host. Again the world was taught to hang upon the breasts of Nature, and to drink the milk of joy; again it was brought back to the fountain of life, to the everyday heart of man, and its ever fresh outgoings. Again the world was comforted, healed, and inspired; taught to love, admire, and rejoice. The simple and quiet, the eternal and ideal, were once more made the heritage and the pleasure of mankind.

These two examples are enough. They might be multiplied out of history. Every resurrection of the life of the world has a similar beginning. And, if we wish to renew the religious life of England, to make our preaching and our practice into inspiration—let us return to the natural, to the common doings and wants of the human heart and the longing spirit; and put the things of mere knowledge, of criticism and analysis, of the barren intellect, into the second place. What have we to do with them when we speak and listen, heart to heart, soul to soul, in the hours of worship; when we commune face to face with God, with nature, and with humanity? With other things we have then to do—with those immortal labours and powers of the universal heart of man which link us to all our brothers and our common Father; which grow not old, interest in which never fails, whose beauty is always new, whose

variety is infinite, whose life kindles life, whose passion has its source in God.

But the subjects contained in this return to the natural and common things are not, it is often said, sufficiently great, or interesting, or beautiful, or enough for a lifetime of teaching. That is the great mistake of the present time. It is that mistake which now makes the work of all the arts so poor, and especially the art of preaching. We have lost the sense that under the universal and common things of human nature, and not in the specialised and the uncommon, the greatest lies, and the loveliest and the most enduring. We have lost the sense that, in those emotions which are common to all men, and not in the working of the educated intellect which is not common to all, that in love and not in knowledge, the noblest and divinest powers lie. We have lost the sense that, not in those ethical doings of conduct which can be prescribed and reckoned up, but in the passionate love of the spirit of man for the perfect—for that which never can be prescribed and never can be reckoned up—the highest glory of man is to be found. Were it otherwise, were the seldom seen the best, and the most rarely met with the most interesting, the world would be indeed misfortune. Had Nature made the most lovely things the least common, it were not well bred of Nature. On the contrary, God, the master of nature, has been so kind to us that all that we need for the exalting of the spirit, for the fairest emotions of the heart, for all that the imagination can desire for its food—is scattered broadcast, in universal profusion, over outward nature and in the world of the human heart. Infinite beauty, joy and love, are poured out before us, if we will but open our eyes and love. Yes, under the common lies the greatest and the loveliest; in the daily life of the affections abides what is most interesting and most inspiring.

And the most enduring and the most moving subjects are to be found in the every-day humanities, in the common love of man to man, in the simple joys and sorrows of simple men and women, in the daily self-forgetfulness of mother and child, of wife and husband, in the feeling which we share with the animals, which have lived for countless centuries. Take only that self-sacrifice for the sake of love, which rejoices to be itself in every rank, and knows no caste. It is the outcome of the love we meet even in the animals. It lives among the savages; it moves in the criminal and the outcast. It rises, through a million varied forms, to its highest form, the sacrifice of a man for the whole world; always great, even in its lowest shape; always holding within itself an infinite capacity for development; always so lovely that it moves the tears and kindles the passion for its imitation in all mankind. Indeed, what is not contained in it which is not most beautiful—all sweet stories of motherhood and of the love of men and women; all tenderness of friendship, all longing of fatherhood for the life of children; all devotion of children to their parents; all courage and fortitude for one another in misfortunes; all sorrows nobly borne, all joys shared each with each, all patriotism, all the great deaths which have glorified mankind, all seeking and saving of the lost!

This, and things like to it, like in their simplicity of love, like in their commonness, are the never-dying subjects, and in these abide and arise all the great poems, all the great stories, all the great pictures,

all the sweet music, and all the great preaching which have inspired, exalted, and consoled the world. We think them too simple, too common for our work, and it is the worst mistake we make. Our deepest prayer should be to see them, and to feel them, and to make others see and feel them. In them we touch God and man, and in bringing God and man together in them we make religion.

When we come closer, with the same thought, to the spiritual in us, the conclusion is the same. It is not so much the extraordinary states of the soul which are the most interesting, as the most usual. It is not the spirit battling with strange and special trouble which awakens the longest desire to help, the deepest desire to reach the secret of life. It is the soul struggling with the common trials which come to all, following the well-known paths, in touch with the ordinary fates of daily life. Take, for example, but two forms of this.

The young man going into the world, the girl striving within to find room in which to act, to shape herself; God speaking to them both; how they will answer Him, what form they will give themselves for the good and help of mankind; what they will be when a few years have gone by; the aspirations they possess, their freshness, their quick hopes and transient despairs; the strife, so silent and self-contained within them; their soul crying out for food, their voiceless prayers, their joyous praise, their wonderful ideals—nothing is more common, yet nothing in the world is more full of undying interest to mankind.

That, however, has the charm of youth; but we call life commonplace in middle age, when its outward forms are fixed. The bloom has gone, the hot afternoon sun takes the shadows away which make various the landscape of life. There is nothing here to interest the preacher or the hearers! Nothing? What of the soul? What, if we look by love into the inward life. It is there, in middle age, that things are often the most wonderful. It is in this common earth to earth life, as it is thought to be, that the terrible trials come; that the battle between good and evil is the hottest; that the sorrows and the loves of life are most profound; that the secrets are deepest, and the loneliness of the soul most uncomfortable; that the deadliest ruin is wrought, and the greatest salvations won. You see men and women, grave, sober, dignified, moving, each in their business and their place, in fitness, through society. "Is this the end," we say, "of youth, this still commonplace? What is there to preach of here?" O lift the veil, let the great poet pass by, let the lover of mankind open his lips, let us see with the eyes of God, and lo, there is Hamlet and Othello, Lady Macbeth or Margaret; Zaccheus, Nathaniel, the Magdalen and Mary—a mighty world in each of sin or sacrifice, of unfathomed sorrow, thought and joy, of rending passion or quiet endurance. There is nothing commonplace.

Open your heart to love humanity, and you will have a thousand sermons in your experience with which to move the world. Return to nature—there is the secret of all the arts—and especially of the art of preaching.

Lastly, this is the way of all the great regenerators of religion; of the masters of preaching and teaching. When Jesus was in Palestine, and spoke the Word which now moves the world even more than it moved it then, how did he preach? what

was his subject? how did he illustrate it? His subject was the human heart of man and the human heart of God, and he did not go beyond it. And the way in which he spoke of it was a way of simplicity. The wayfaring man could not err from his meaning, for all he said lay within the daily experience of men. And the illustrations he used were drawn from the common things of earth and air which lay before the eyes of all men.

What is God? How shall I know Him? God is a Father, Jesus replied, and loves us as we love our children. Think of all that your heart feels as a father, and then you will know God. Think of all you felt as a child when you loved your father most, and then you will know all you ought to feel for God and all you ought to do.

I have sinned, I have been plunged in sorrow, I doubt my immortal life. Will God forgive, will he console, will he make me alive again?

Look into your own heart of love for the answers. The kingdom of God is within you. What would you do as father or mother? So will God do, only more abundantly,—and we hear, like music across the ages, the parable of the Shepherd and the Prodigal Son. So, by direct appeal to the universal feelings of the heart, Jesus explained the whole relation of God to man and man to God.

How shall I enter the kingdom? This is the subject of a thousand dissertations. Did Jesus discuss? He took a child and set him in the midst. Think of the child, how it feels and loves and trusts; there is the temper of the kingdom—always, always the appeal to the natural! Of what kind is the kingdom, how does it grow, what sort is my union with God, how far must I sacrifice myself? Look at nature! at the growing seed, at the fate of the harvest, at the leaven in the meal, at the union of the vine with the branches, at the sacrifice of the shepherd for the sheep, of friend for friend. The whole of nature and humanity is a parable, of which God and man are the interpretation.

Is morality enough? Can I say, "If I do this I shall live"? Oh, no! you will only live when you love the perfect Love, and are never satisfied in pursuing it. When you love on earth, can you ever do enough for those you love? What says, that is, the human heart? It was to that Jesus appealed, even when he held before us the unreachable ideals, and bid us strive towards them for ever.

And to this kind of teaching, to this simple, universal, quiet, ideal appeal to the love in the heart of man, the soul of man answered as the waters of the great ocean answer to the sun and moon. Spring, after a long winter, came upon the spirit of humanity. A new created world broke into life. Imagination was reborn in religion. Womanhood was re-created for mankind. Fresh waters burst forth from the earth, and fertilised the works of man. The arts found, in his return to nature and to the ideal, the food they needed. Painting, sculpture, poetry recovered in recovering nature. And, foremost in the new life, and doing in the mightiest way the glorious work of bringing inspiration, healing, joy, and peace to every type and class of man, arose into nobility and power, out of this return to the universal heart of man and God, the art of preaching.

WEDNESDAY'S MEETINGS.

THE proceedings were resumed on Wednesday morning with a devotional service, in which the Revs. J. E. Manning, M.A.,

A. Lazenby, and J. Ellis took part. There was a large attendance.

The Conference was opened at 10.30, under the chairmanship of Alderman HARRY RAWSON, J.P., of Manchester, the hall being crowded with delegates and friends.

THE DIAMOND JUBILEE: ADDRESS TO HER MAJESTY.

The CHAIRMAN announced that before proceeding with the ordinary business of the conference, Mr. James R. Beard had a resolution to propose.

Mr. BEARD said that was the first moment when their conference became fully constituted, constituted by the admission of the foreign delegates, constituted by religious worship and communion, and he took that, the first opportunity, of bringing before them a resolution which he was sure would commend itself to their most earnest sympathy and approval. It was present in their minds, he was sure, that they this year saw the completion of the sixtieth year of the most glorious reign of Queen Victoria, and they who represented churches who had always been conspicuous for their loyalty to the Hanoverian succession would not be behind the rest of the country in testifying their loyalty and devotion. As Christian churches they must feel that they owed a special debt of gratitude to Her for a high example, which had not been without its effect in improving the morality of the whole country. The Queen's life had been a golden thread running through the texture of our national history, and they wished that day, most heartily, to express their loyalty to the Throne, their devotion to her person, and their gratitude for the constitutional way in which she had reigned, and for the very deep sympathy which she had shown with all suffering and grief among her subjects. After reading the Address (given below), he said he wished to express his personal agreement with the words of the Address, and his admiration for the eloquent and touching way in which that Address had been drawn up by their esteemed and revered old friend, the Rev. S. A. Steinthal (applause).

Mr. HERBERT BRAMLEY (Town Clerk of Sheffield), in seconding the resolution, said he thought they all admired Her Majesty for her constitutional behaviour, the fact that she knew that Royalty had its duties to carry out quite as much as its privileges, and they all admired the Queen for the strength of her character and her loving heart. He did not think he could add anything more, except that he was delighted to think they would pass this resolution in a city where they hoped, in about six weeks to see Her Most Gracious Majesty open their new Town Hall (applause).

The resolution was carried, with one dissentient, and a committee was appointed to arrange for the presentation of the Address, which was as follows:—

That the address to her Majesty, which is now read, be adopted, and that the president (Mr. Beard), the treasurer and secretaries, together with the Rev. S. A. Steinthal, Mr. David Martineau, and Dr. Blake Odgers, Q.C., be appointed a committee to arrange for its presentation.

[COPY.]

To the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty,—The loyal and dutiful address of the Unitarians, Liberal Christians, Free Christians, and Presbyterians of Great Britain and Ireland in Conference assembled,

May it please your Majesty,—This National Conference most humbly begs to associate itself with all your Majesty's loyal subjects in congratulating you on the completion of the sixtieth

year of your glorious reign. The Conference represents many Nonconformist congregations, whose ancestors in troublous days proved their loyalty to your royal house, and who now respectfully assure you that they are animated by the same spirit of devotion to your Majesty as were their fathers to your royal predecessors.

This Conference thanks God that He has graciously prolonged your rule for so many years, in which your pure and noble life has called forth, besides the reverence due to the Sovereign, that fervent and respectful love which makes your loyal people over all the earth rejoice that your reign has been lengthened beyond all precedent. Nor can a gathering of Christian churches omit gratefully to acknowledge the deep obligation which they feel to your gracious Majesty for the noble example of high and pure morality which your life and Court has given to the nations.

Tried as you have been by many personal sorrows, your royal heart has comforted your people with its quick sympathy and cheered them with its generous help, given with gracious beneficence alike to all classes of your subjects.

Beneath your faithful adherence to the constitutional principles of your monarchy, civil and religious freedom, commerce, education, and the liberal arts have blessed with ever-widening range the increasing numbers of the peoples who are happy in calling you their Queen and Empress. The churches represented in the National Conference have, during your reign, been granted a security which they never before enjoyed, and have been permitted to share in advantages from which they had previously been debarred; and, while devoutly thanking God for preserving to your vast empire the blessing of your gracious sovereignty for so many years, they join all your faithful people in the prayer that, surrounded and beloved by your children and your children's children, your future years may be spent in the peaceful enjoyment of the honour and the reverent affection of your grateful people and the respect and admiration of the civilised world.

MEANS OF DEEPENING SPIRITUAL LIFE OF OUR CHURCHES.

The CHAIRMAN said the friends were to be congratulated on the happy selection made of the subject which occupied the first and foremost place on the programme of their proceedings. (Hear, hear).

The papers were as follows:—

BY THE REV. JOSEPH WOOD.

I do not stand here to speak of our churches in a pessimistic mood. On the contrary, I think there is cause for rejoicing in what has been achieved, and greater cause for hope in the new time upon which we are entering. It may suit outsiders who have not particularly clear eyes for appreciating spiritual results to speak of our churches as failures because we have not grown into a powerful organisation, nor crowded our aisles with worshippers. But it would ill become us to measure spiritual effort by material standards. Our churches are yet in their spring-time, the vegetation is scanty, the fruit is not yet developed; but the green life in the hedges, and the sweet pastures starred with daffodils, and the budding trees, are a prophecy of the coming summer, although to-day the east wind bites shrewdly, and late frosts hold back the full tide of life. Failure, indeed! when on every hand we see the ideas moving on for which we exist. Enough has been achieved to vindicate our enterprise, more than enough to justify our Hallelujahs!

Yet we have to confess that it is not with us as it ought to be. We have not had the success we looked for and had a right to expect. Our progress as churches has been chequered and interrupted. For many of us have been passive, indifferent, apathetic. There has not been about us the victorious movement of a fervent faith. We look back with shame upon periods of dryness, dullness, and deadness. We have scarcely believed that we could be triumphant. We have been too content with holding our own, or with sowing the fruits reaped by others. We have found immense comfort in a modern reading of an ancient text, 'Ye have laboured, and other men have entered into your labours.' Well, for my part, I am not content that other churches should reap all the harvest we have

sown. I want our churches to reap also. I am not content to see the cause flourish elsewhere while the martyr churches which gave it birth, and laboured and suffered for it, gather none of the spoils.

Matthew Arnold once reproached us with the sterility of our churches. I am not concerned to inquire how far his reproach was true. But this we all admit, that we do not advance as we could desire. You can scarcely go into a ministerial assembly, large or small, without hearing the question discussed almost *ad nauseam*. Why is it we make so little progress? Various answers to that painful question are given. We are told that it is want of organisation, want of flexibility, imperfect and out-of-date machinery, dull and inartistic services, feeble preaching, a church order that is not democratic enough, a church order that is too democratic, etc., etc. I do not despise these matters. It may be true we sadly need to perfect our organisation, to improve our machinery, to beautify our services, to make our pulpits more attractive, and to systematise our ecclesiastical arrangements; but after all these are not the essence of the matter. A good workman will do more with clumsy tools than a bad workman with the most finished tools in the workshop. Given Faith, Life, Spirit, and the machinery will soon adjust itself to the necessities of the case. If we have to lament times of torpor and small success, let us be faithful with ourselves, and recognise that the cause is first of all in us, in our want of Life, Faith, Spirit. There is a line of one of good old Dr. Watts's hymns which speaks of living 'at this poor dying rate.' I fear it is a too apt description of some of our churches: they live 'at a poor dying rate!' The reason is surely want of inward heat, not faulty machinery; the lack of life, not the lack of organisation. I believe I am speaking the feeling of many hearts when I say that the question of questions for our churches is how to breathe into them the breath of a new life. 'Tis life whereof their nerves are scant; more life and fuller that they want.'

I ask you to consider the condition of our churches in relation to their spiritual life.

If I were to say that there had been any great decay of spiritual life in our churches, or that the type of character presented by our churches in the present day is, taken altogether, not only different in phase but inferior in substance to that which our fathers knew, I should not expect to carry with me the judgment of this Conference. Still less should I expect your assent if I were to assert that the spiritual life of our churches, or the type of character they nourish, suffered by comparison with that of other churches. We have our own dear saints, thank God, who may rank with the fairest, the holiest, the most devoted in the calendar of Christendom. I institute no comparisons. I do not say that we are worse than other Christian communities. I only ask, Is our spiritual condition such as we can contemplate without grave solicitude? There is, I joyfully acknowledge, another side to the matter. Many of our churches and missions are conspicuous for their spiritual vitality. The aggregate of saintliness, gifts, and services which they present must awaken our gratitude and admiration. To few of them should we look in vain for individual examples of great moral and spiritual excellence. But, alas! is it not true that in some of them the prevailing spirit is a spirit of slumber? Can we say that they exhibit in anything but a feeble and indecisive way, Faith, Life, Spirit? They live at a poor, dying rate. They are without passion and consistent force. The corporate, collective life beats with a feeble pulse, and we are painfully conscious of cramped enthusiasms and half-hearted beliefs. Is it true that when we cross their threshold we feel that we are breathing a quickened atmosphere, the atmosphere of high appeals and splendid endeavour, and quick, eager sympathy with great causes? Do we feel that we are breathing a finer moral tone and a diviner peace, a more delicate sense of right and a more victorious wrath against wrong than we found outside? Oh, brethren! do not think that I am flinging out censures. I am only suggesting inquiries which are not to be understood or intended for positive affirmations, but only as indicating some of the directions for our consideration. It seems to me that there are certain 'signs' in the condition of our churches which laity and ministers should alike take to heart. And if I address my first set of questions to the laity and my second to the ministers, it is not that they can really be considered apart, but as indicating where the first attempt at improvement must begin.

1. I would ask the laity—Is it not true that

there is a growing laxity in attendance at public worship among the members of our congregations? And, further, if this be true, is it not a sign of decaying interest in the things of the spirit and the spirit's life? With the passing away of Sabbatic narrowness and superstition have we not often failed to recognise the immense boon, privilege, and advantage of Sunday rest, with its old hallowed, recurring customs of worship? How many of our elders seem to have come to the conclusion that the church services that entered so largely into their youth are no longer needful now that they have acquired wisdom and experience. The preacher can tell them nothing new; they know already what he has to say; there is no benefit for them in these time-worn Sunday usages. They live upright, devoted lives, but they have ceased to brood on the things of the Spirit and to feel the charm and grace of joining in common acts of devotion. They do not consider how far their neglect of public worship may be really a kind of selfishness—how their absence robs the worship of the church of something of its fulness and volume—how by their presence they might swell the tide of sympathy and devotion on which other souls rise to God. They do not consider that deeper, profounder reason for public worship, the need of reverence to any greatness of soul, and the need of reverence to express itself. That public worship in its essence is the soul's admiring homage to Eternal Love and Wisdom; that it is the expressed adoration of absolute Moral Perfection; that it is the soul confessing the glory, the goodness, the beauty, the holiness, the splendour of Immortal Love; that the reverence that does not express itself will soon wither away; that not to render this homage of reverence is to dishonour and belittle the soul—these great and paramount reasons for public worship seem, in many cases, to have passed out of view. I will not stay to argue whether the soul's uttered assent to the mind and judgment, to the goodness and wisdom of God, is not as dew upon the dry ground of spiritual life. There is a nobler reason for public worship than personal edification. It is a necessity for love, admiration, and reverence to seek expression. There is no prayer for personal benefit in that noblest lyric ever sung in heaven or on earth, 'Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.' The note of that hymn of hymns is perfect moral admiration.

But if the great reason for public worship has been lost sight of by our elders, how can we expect it to be appreciated by their children? It is impossible to make the young respect the ordinances of worship if their elders tacitly assert that they have outgrown them. And when, in addition, the rage for athletics, which possesses our age, takes hold of our young people, so that everything else is of less importance and interest, we need not wonder at the spread of Sunday tennis, Sunday boating, Sunday cycling, Sunday billiards, Sunday theatricals. The excuse that the health of the stalwart young men of our well-to-do families is so delicate and precious as to require Sunday for physical recreation is a little too thin. Frances Power Cobbe warned us, years ago, that from neglecting health, sanitation, hygiene and physical development, we were in danger of rushing to the other extreme, and making them a fetish. Certainly we are in danger of thinking, or at least of acting, as if highly-developed muscles were a means of grace, and bodily vigour not a bad substitute for the spirit of devotion. There are Sunday-schools that cycling and football are wrecking, and churches that are smitten with paralysis by reason of week-day pleasures, excitements, games and recreations carried on into Sunday.

2. This leads straight to my second question. Has not the religious training of our young been left too much to chance? Is it not true that in many homes, even of cultured people, the children have never had anything like definite religious instruction? Is there not among us an inadequate sense of the Christian parents' responsibilities? We are careful that our sons and daughters shall be thoroughly drilled in mathematics and music, in language and science; we spare no pains to secure for them the best instruction in secular knowledge, while too often we allow them to grow up very poorly furnished in knowledge either of the faith of their fathers or Free Church principles. Are we not too reticent with our children about the things that are nearest and dearest to us? Are we not less shocked that they should be ignorant of the Bible than that they should be ignorant of Homer? Is it not true that there are young people who leave us for other churches simply because

they have not been instructed in the distinctive principles of our faith and freedom have never heard them explained, have never been taught a hearty affection for them. We sadly need for our families and schools a Manual of Free Church principles, and the British and Foreign Association could not do a better work than give us a popular handbook for the enlightenment of our young people. We have a generation growing up among us, not only with a most imperfect acquaintance with the history and principles of our churches, but in still sadder ignorance of the fundamental facts of the religious consciousness, and of the fundamental truths of the Christian Gospel.

3. I have only time to suggest the heads of a third line of inquiry for the laity. Is not the spiritual life of our churches suffering from the growth of a certain secularity of mind, fostered largely by the developments of trade, wealth, and material resources which belong to our age; by the all-pervading ambition to better social position; by the multiplicity of amusements, excitements, and social distractions which are found so sweet and seductive; by the contempt with which we have come to regard the simplicities and austerities that once marked our free churches? It is unnecessary to protest that one is not a Puritan in the matter of amusement nor an advocate of the early Quakers' plainness of dress, nor in favour of drawing artificial lines between the church and the world, because one is keenly alive to the danger of our modern luxurious habits and craving for daily excitement. One may rejoice in the richer, freer life of our day, and yet be painfully conscious that simplicity, sincerity, truth, conscience, lofty standards, all suffer from the rage for wealth, the greed for amusement, the excitements, ambition, and interests of a hectic social life. The quiet sanctities of the heart and the home come at last to be too tame for our jaded nerves. The insatiate desire in all classes to gain wealth, to enjoy it, to enjoy it after the fashion of the world—the entirely false estimate of what money can do for human happiness, enfeebles the tone of spiritual life. Consider how the unprecedented facilities for 'rising in the world,' as it is called, which mark the nineteenth century, tend to push into the background, to make vague, shadowy, and dream-like the heavenly realities. In many homes, especially in the middle classes, 'getting on' now takes the place of 'getting up.' How many look for their children's worldly advancement with an ardour which they never display for their spiritual welfare. The overmuch of amusements, the luxuries, the extravagancies, the waste of quickly-acquired wealth which has nothing but scorn for 'plain living and high thinking,'—all these and their like affect our churches, lower their vitality, and slowly leaven with the poison of a worldly mind the whole lump!

I turn to ministers, not as their censor—God forbid—but as a brother in arms, who suggests no weakness of which he is not painfully conscious in his own experience. Brethren, we cannot relieve ourselves from responsibility when considering the spiritual life of our churches. We may not throw the blame upon the laity. This is supremely our affair. Is it our preaching that is at fault? Is it that we fail in adaptedness to the new wants of the new age? Is it that our ministry is lacking in the elements that make for the 'edifying of the church,' 'the perfecting of the saints,' and the husbandry of spiritual life, into nobler forms and proportions than are usually witnessed?

Let me briefly make these inquiries—

1. Are we not sometimes more concerned about questions and problems than about souls? Are we not apt to put the emphasis of our mission somewhere else than on Men, namely, on Truth. In our zeal for truth, do we not sometimes forget that we are first of all called to be fishers of men? There is a great deal of most praiseworthy earnestness about truth. We are zealous in fighting against errors and superstitions that have disfigured the Gospel and caricatured our Father in heaven; we are moved to the depths of our souls while we contend for a purer and a more verifiable creed. But our earnestness is often, when at white heat, about questions rather than men. Our hearers do not always feel that we are anxious about them, and they feel that, while there is fire of a kind, the preacher's heart is not warm towards them.

Now, we may burn with zeal for a rational faith, and have little concern for souls. To lift the fallen, cheer the faint, give sight to the blind, and healing to the sick, and bread to the hungry, and hope to the despairing, is apt to pass into the second place, while we devote ourselves

to what we call truth; by which we mean proving or disproving matters of great importance indeed, but not matters that lay hold on men's hearts and persuade them to mercy, pity, peace and love. Surely we do well to be in earnest, in deadly earnest, in the investigation of truth, and in vindicating its claims on human allegiance; but the injunction that is laid upon us first is to move men to hate iniquity and love goodness, and to translate the truths of which they were never in doubt into life and character.

2. Among the subjects of our preaching, do we place the right emphasis on the great, simple, elevating things that give religion its grandeur and sway? Is not Matthew Arnold's advice to the poet worth remembering by the preacher—'I counsel him to choose for his subjects great actions.' Should not the preacher's subjects have strong moral and religious interest? Should they not have a distinctly personal bearing? Is it not a pity that the precious opportunity should be wasted on petty and minute subjects, or subjects that, however interesting in themselves, are off the track of life's great and serious concerns? It is told of a certain great personage who went one Sunday morning to hear Dean Stanley preach in Westminster Abbey that, on returning, he was asked by a lady friend, 'Well, how did you like the sermon?' 'Oh,' was the reply, 'it was very good; there was nothing to object to; but it was not what I went to hear: I went to hear about the way to heaven, and I only heard about the way to Palestine.' Now, the great Dean might fairly object to the story, if it were regarded as conveying a just impression of his ordinary preaching; but does not the criticism touch one of the defects of a good deal of modern preaching? Questions of historical interest, descriptions of the Holy Land, scientific and ethnographic knowledge, nice points of Biblical criticism, may well adorn the pulpit; but after all, the people want to learn the way to Heaven, rather than the way to Palestine. When the preacher meets his congregation on Sunday morning, he is face to face with a few score souls, whose failures, sins, weaknesses, and dangers appeal to him for help, whose burdens and sorrows want comfort, whose fading vows for good need strengthening. There are only so many minutes given him during which he may minister to their necessities, and he has little time to spare for anything which does not bear directly on their spiritual welfare. Surely his preaching should show that he has been studying them as well as theological problems. Surely his subjects, as a rule, should be those which stir the hearts of men and touch the great duties, the great hopes, the great fears, and the great sorrows of life. Under the influence of a morbid dread of being commonplace, or a juvenile passion for originality, men are in danger of avoiding the great highways of religious thought and human experience, wandering off into little bye-paths, which are pleasant enough, but lead to nowhere in particular. Is it not our wisdom to give the foremost place to those great subjects which, in all ages, have exerted the profoundest influence on the moral and spiritual life of men? There is immortal strength in these great simple subjects; they nourish the hopes affections and trusts which are the breath of life to all noble souls.

3. Lastly, I ask, with all deference and diffidence, Does not the spiritual life of our churches suffer because we fail to make enough of our simple, human, reasonable, natural Christ? In our wholesome repudiation of the supernatural and miraculous Christ, have we not sometimes left out of view the fact which all history emphasises—that humanity needs for its uplifting a human leader, a human example, some Word of God made flesh? Have we not taken too little account of how the imagination and affections twine round a person as they twine round nothing else? A lofty morality and a heavenly ideal are not enough until we see them breathing warm, human breath and living in some brother soul. I believe Emerson to have been for once profoundly mistaken when he said, 'Christianity has dwelt, it dwells, with noxious exaggeration, about the person of Jesus. The soul knows no persons.' And again, 'A true conversion is by the reception of beautiful sentiments.' If beautiful sentiments were enough, Plato's Dialogues ought to have been sufficient for the world's salvation. Men are saved, not by sentiments, however beautiful, but by personal attraction, personal sympathy, personal loyalty, personal example. The soul is drawn to Jesus long before it grasps all his great teaching. If beautiful sentiments will convert the world, we have only to put a volume of Emerson into every man's hand and the thing is done. It is

the beautiful sentiment incarnate in a human soul which is the power of God unto salvation. We renounce the great inspiration of religious life for the western world when we drop out Christ from our preaching. That he should be loved and revered, that he who sits enthroned in the gateways of eternity should be followed with all the devotion of personal loyalty, is for the western world to-day, as it has been in the past, the way of progress. Saying power is always in the soul, and lives never in creeds and sentiments. And here let me conclude by quoting the noble words of Mrs. Humphry Ward, who will not be suspected of any undue leanings towards orthodoxy:—'The distrust and weariness of Christianity which is common among some of the best men and women of the present day is the most wasteful, the most uncalled for, surrender of its own wealth that modern life can make. In presence of a system, founded, as every great and victorious religious system must be founded, on perennial needs of human nature, bound up with the hopes and sorrows, the tears, the agonies, the joys, of 1800 years, which has absorbed the Theism of Judea, the ethical thought of Greece, the governing power of Rome, and has added to them an emotion and an enthusiasm all its own, are we to refuse the task of adaptation and reconstruction laid upon us? Is it so little to us that history should once for us Europeans have lifted a human life so high: that in divinising the sufferer of Calvary, our race should have made so vast an effort to set for ever before its wondering eyes the type of truth, purity, and self-forgetting pain?' Brethren, I do not believe that we can afford to dispense with the loyalty, the discipleship, the love, the attractive image which touched and raised our fathers, and which come to us steeped in and consecrated by an unfathomable human experience. To think that beautiful sentiments, or extracts from Vedic hymns, or the Comtist Calendar can ever be a substitute for the sweet old Gospel story—none the less the word of God and the power of God when stripped of miracle, myth and legend—is to shew ourselves strangely ignorant of human nature.

Brethren, forgive me if I have spoken in a tone that seemed too condemnatory. Out of the fulness of the heart the mouth speaketh, and whatsoever I have said has been with one desire only—that our churches should be burdened with the love, subdued with the tenderness, quickened with the vitality, and saturated with the genius of the glorious gospel of the Blessed God!

BY THE REV. W. E. ADDIS.

I ACCEPTED the invitation to read this paper with great reluctance, and now I cannot rid myself of the conviction that I have been rash and over-confident in accepting it at all. This diffidence arises in part from personal defects of which I cannot speak to others. But there are additional reasons which make the subject too difficult for me. One who speaks on the means of deepening spiritual life within a certain group of societies ought to accept the principles of religion as acknowledged by those, or, at least, by the great mass of those, to whom he speaks, and he ought at the same time to feel sure that these principles afford a sufficient foundation on which men and women can be built up into a spiritual temple in the Lord. I cannot address myself to my task in the strength which such a trust would inspire. I must, therefore, beg your forbearance if I do the best I can and try to describe the means which commend themselves to me, though I have no reason to think that they are likely to obtain general approval here. The remarks which I have to make fall naturally into two divisions. First, I shall say something about that 'law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus,' to which all toil for the spiritual good of others must conform, and next I shall touch upon the outward means which, if not absolutely necessary for the very existence of a Christian congregation, are still calculated to promote its good estate.

What, then, is the first demand which all that is best and highest in those who hear makes upon us who teach? Surely this, that we should deal with the certainties which make for their eternal peace, and not with matters of doubtful disputation. We need not dogmatise or lay down hard and fast rules to preclude a minister from dealing with matters of biblical criticism or church history, or even from discussing that ephemeral literature or those questions of the day which are likely to attract an audience, and which, while they please and interest,

are not always calculated to leave them more humble and devout, fitter to fight with sin, and promote the kingdom of God in themselves and others. Our hearers, moreover, are often quite incapable of entering on critical inquiry. They lack the preliminary knowledge, the leisure, and, above all, the trained judgment which are requisite. More than this. But besides that, they desire something higher and better. For they are of like passions with ourselves. They are beset with temptations to mean and unworthy conduct, to worldliness and indifference; they are threatened by the deadly lusts which war against the soul. They experience many a trial and sorrow; they seem to be encompassed with dark and hopeless mystery. Can we find light for ourselves and then declare it to them? Have we any certainty to offer? Yes, unless the New Testament be a delusion from beginning to end. Observe how our blessed Lord began his work. He said that the kingdom of God was at hand, and so far he scarcely advanced beyond the teaching of the Baptist. But he added at once, 'The time is fulfilled; believe in the good news.' He professed that he had come to seek and save that which is lost. He revealed the love of the Father, placed the Fatherhood of God for the first time in the very centre of religion, and gave to the divine Fatherhood a new and deeper sense. The heathen had known of a 'father of gods and men,' who exercised some general superintendence over them, but was very far from realising the ideal of a human, let alone a divine, life. The Hebrew prophets had thought of God as the Father of Israel collectively, and of the king as representing the nation. One of the psalmists had dwelt in pathetic language on God's fatherly pity for those that fear Him, and the allowance which he makes for such poor creatures as men on the ground that we are but dust. So, again, the Greek philosophers had conceived of man as the 'offspring' of that divine and impersonal spirit which is the soul of all things. Christ, on the contrary, regarded divine sonship as a moral quality of which all men are capable, if they desire and ask for and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 'If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?' In many ways he explained the divine likeness in which this sonship consists. He said, for example, 'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God.' Instead of making, as the Psalmist did, the fatherhood of God an excuse for weakness on our part, he calls us as sons of God to imitate the Father even in the crowning attribute of divine perfection the attribute of redeeming love. Thus Christ distinguished clearly between the capacity for divine sonship inherent in man and that actual sonship which belongs to those that are Christ's, and who are filled, in the Apostle's language, with all the fulness of God. Nobody, I suppose, will question the beauty of this picture even if it had no reality. But just because it is a true ideal it is real, is being constantly realised in the life of the individual and of the Church. It was realised first in the historic Christ. He persuades us of its truth by the divine boldness with which he who was meek and humble of heart separates himself from the sinfulness of human nature. He enters on his labour as the Son in whom God is well pleased. He refers to himself in the Synoptic, no less than in St. John's Gospel, not as a son, but as the Son. Nevertheless, he identifies his interests with ours. He asserts that no man cometh unto the Father but by him, implying by the very limitation that he has opened for all a new and living way to the Father. He gives the gracious invitation, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' Not for himself only, but for us men and our salvation he overcame death upon the cross, and by his resurrection brought life and immortality to light. The New Testament from beginning to end testifies to this new life in Christ. 'Thanks be to God,' says St. Paul, 'who giveth us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord,' and St. Peter, 'whom having not seen ye love, in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory,' and St. John, 'that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us, and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with Jesus Christ His Son.' I humbly believe that this gospel is and will ever be the power of God unto salvation. If we have, very imperfectly, of course, but still really experienced its power, then we can be witnesses for Christ and ambassadors in his name. The religion of the New

Testament is one, and the greatest of living critics, Professor Harnack, hits the nail on the head when he begs the unlettered but devout Christian to go on reading the Gospels as he has ever done in the confidence that, after all, the learned critic cannot read it otherwise. The Saviour's life is unique in the power it has to win the hearts of us sinners, to give faith in God as one on whom we may rely, and who says to our souls, 'I am thy salvation.' 'Christianity,' says a saint of modern times, the late Rev. Frederic Maurice, 'is not a doctrine, but a life.' In proportion, then, as we taste of the heavenly gift, and as minister of God impart it to others, in proportion as we forego all party and theological names, and hold only to Christ's words, Christ's life, Christ's cross, Christ's resurrection, Christ's exaltation at the right hand of the Father, Christ's presence with the believer, and especially where two or three are gathered together in His name,—in proportion, I say, as we strive to do all this, we shall, by God's grace, rise and raise others from the death of sin to the life of righteousness.

We must, I think, constantly remember and take care to present the religion of the Bible as a revelation, *i.e.*, as a process through which God, little by little, in many ways and in many portions, but still continuously, unveiled His character and gracious purpose till, at last, He whom no man hath seen at any time, neither can see, declared Himself once and for ever in the person of His only begotten Son. No doubt philosophy can, in some sense, apprehend God as the first cause, the substance which underlies all accidents, the absolute being. Whether philosophy can discover God as a living Person, as one whose eyes are too pure to look upon iniquity, who hears prayer and forgives sin, is, to say the least, doubtful. It is, in any case, certain that philosophy has never led any large body of men to believe in a personal God, much less has it taught them that God is love, or formed a church in which men meet as children, and forget the vain distinctions of rank and wealth and talent and education. Holy Scripture throughout represents God as one who draws near to men, and makes Himself known to them. He revealed Himself to Israel that Israel might be the light of the nations through Him who was born of the seed of Abraham to be the light of His Father's glory and the light of the world. This idea of revelation is the first condition of all religion worthy of the name, nor, so far as practical purposes, need we curiously enquire how far, and in what sense, revelation has been vouchsafed outside the limits of the Jewish and Christian Covenants; whether, *e.g.*, and in what sense, that growth of ethical ideas from Homer to Pindar, and from Pindar to Æschylus, and from Æschylus to Sophocles, and from Sophocles to Plato, may be called a revelation. It is the fact of the revelation given in Holy Scripture, and which is complete in Christ, though it never ceases to admit of first application, which concerns us and our people, and which alone is even accessible to most of them. We ought not to expect the man of business, troubled about many things, to listen on Sundays to theories on the true bearing of evolution, or new attempts to solve the insoluble problem of evil. Many men, however, will listen to the deep and simple revelation of God in Christ. They will be led to faith in God by learning something of Christ's divine life. They will catch the absorbing words as they fall from the lips of Him who, being Himself all holy, yet 'receiveth sinners,' and they will dare to believe that their own sins are forgiven them for His name's sake. They will experience that blessedness which rises above the conditions which Aristotle laid down for earthly happiness, that peace which the world cannot give or take away, that divine strength which is made perfect in weakness. They will enter into the spirit of the Apostle's words—'as sorrowing, yet always rejoicing, as having nothing, yet possessing all things.' In the light cast of Christ's cross, they will be begotten to a new and living hope that all things work together for good. They will receive the triumphs of God's kingdom in the past as their security that one day all things will be put under Christ's feet, and that God will be all in all.

We need not be afraid that true Christianity will ever degenerate into mysticism. It is true that that danger is a very real one where men have formed Pantheistic conceptions of the divine, or, again, in the reaction from burdensome ritual or asceticism, or among pious Roman Catholics, who are prone to mysticism, partly because it seems to furnish a way of escape from slavery to dogma and ritual, partly

because the Church of Rome has forgotten the meaning of faith in the New Testament use of the term, and has made much of that idea of God which, as is supposed, may be revealed by reason, and forms part of a so-called natural religion. True Christianity is incompatible with mysticism, with that contemplative life which Roman Catholics esteem so highly, following herein the teaching of Aristotle, but not the teaching of the New Testament. And, indeed, we may think it our highest privilege to contemplate and adore God's attributes so long as we think of God merely as the first mover or the ocean and abyss of being. It is far different when our eyes are turned to the one perfect vision of God, to God in Christ, to God manifest in the life of Him who went about doing good. The New Testament never speaks of God as abstract being, or at least it never dwells upon that thought. It gives a definition of God which transcends all philosophy, for it tells us that God is love. It binds the service of God to the service of man, connects the two commands of love to God and love to man, which had hitherto stood apart, and assures us that here we have end and aim of all previous revelation. We are to appear each one of us before the Judgment Seat of Christ, and then, as we know, Christ will recognise no devotion save the devotion of a Christ-like mind issuing in Christ-like deeds. In this life of active service we have to lead and then point the way, and the power of Christ's spirit is to supply the motive power of works for the bodies and souls of men, and also to grow in strength the more strength it expends. A church which does nothing for others may be a religious club; it is not, however, a Christian church. It has a name to live and is dead.

Once more, the life in Christ is entirely supernatural. It appeals to men for that very reason. They are weary of their worldly, commonplace views, and Christ buys them back from these at a great price. If a man wants to hold the 'religion of all sensible people,' he need not look for it in the New Testament. There, no doubt, we find heavenly wisdom, but a wisdom which the world counts foolishness. The mystery of God in Christ knows nothing of the metaphysical speculations which have been the bewilderment and delight of theologians.

For all that, Christ has his hard sayings, though they are of quite another kind. Such are, 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God,' 'It is more blessed to give than to receive,' 'He who loseth his life for my sake and the Gospel's shall find it,' 'Be not anxious for the morrow,' 'Except ye be converted and become as little children ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven,' and many others. Probably, none of us would dare to say that he really and fully believes these great sayings. Only by abidance in the truth and patient waiting for Christ do we obtain some glimpse of their hidden wisdom.

I can but touch lightly and hurriedly on the second part of my subject, *viz.*, the practical and outward means by which we can deepen the spiritual life of a Christian church. All that I have to suggest is obvious enough. We should attach the greatest importance to the devotional part of our Sunday services, preparing ourselves for that part of our work by private prayer and the study which will attune our hearts to the solemn words which we utter and endeavouring to believe with our whole heart in the sublime dignity of the office laid upon us—that of leading and guiding the prayers of Christian people. By example and precept we should restore the habit of united and daily family prayer among our people. We have to insist in season and out of season on the necessity of private prayer, if we would labour with fruit either for ourselves or others. We have to remember the imminent peril of teaching others while we ourselves become castaways. We may take it as a sign for good if we are able some time in the week to gather together some of our people for prayer, though I know by sad experience how hard this is. We should supply our people with good books; I do not mean controversial literature, if literature it can be called, but rather such books as the 'Confessions of St. Augustine,' 'Imitation of Christ,' the 'Pilgrim's Progress,' the 'Christian Year,' Robertson's sermons, one or two of Maurice's works, such as his discourses on the Lord's Prayer, or, again, Canon Gore's excellent exposition of the Sermon on the Mount; let us add to these the biographies of good men. Nor can we forget the Bible is the best of all books, and that nothing else will profit us if we neglect that, or fail to read it 'for doctrine, for reproof,

for instruction in righteousness, that the men of God may be perfectly furnished unto all good works.

Great help also comes from the Sacraments of the Gospel reverently used. I am as far, I hope, as any one can be from the superstition which degrades the Sacraments into mechanical means of grace or magical charms. But how can we value them too highly as signs of Christian fellowship, and not bare signs, but rather 'sure witnesses and effectual signs of grace and God's goodwill towards us by the which He doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken but also strengthen and confirm our faith in Him.' It is no light thing that our little ones should be sprinkled with the water which symbolises the cleansing and hallowing influences of the Christian family and church, should be baptised into the threefold benediction, declared children of God, grafted into Christ's church and bound to remember to their life's end that they have not chosen Christ, but Christ them. How can we realise more easily and sweetly than in the Holy Communion that feeding on the character of Christ in which all Christian privilege and duty is comprised. The Lord's Supper should be also the outward symbol of the church's life, and give us some encouragement in the depressing thought that right to membership is constituted by the payment of a subscription. The Communion also affords the best means, and one not of our devising, by which our young people may bind themselves in allegiance to Christ, and acknowledge unostentatiously but in a most solemn manner their obligation to confess Christ in their daily lives.

When we have got that far it may become easier for the minister and for others to break down the barriers which often make painful separation between man and man, to read and pray with the sick, to meet difficulties, to comfort the mourner, to speak a word in season to him that is weary. Nowhere is delicacy and tact more needed than in pastoral work. There are rocks ahead, dangers of unreality and cant, undue excitement and morbid craving for human sympathy, but also coldness and reserve and the shyness which keeps back the helpful word. Only when the spiritual life is vigorous and true it will not fail to clothe itself in the outward form suitable for its expression.

The discussion was opened by the Rev. JAMES DRUMMOND, M.A., LL.D., D.Litt. He said that this subject they all felt was one of most profound importance, not only to their congregational life, but to every one of them individually. It would be impossible, in a few words, to touch on the various topics brought before them, but he thought he would not be wrong in referring especially to the time-honoured means of promoting the spiritual life which had been justified by the experience of centuries, namely, their meeting together, week by week, for common worship, and to listen to the exhortation of some chosen speaker. How much devolved upon the minister! How deep his responsibilities, and how apt they were, he was afraid, to fall short of their responsibilities, for two very different reasons. He believed that amongst them there was as profound a spiritual and Christian life as in any body of people on this earth, but amongst their finest characters there had grown up a habit of religious reticence, due partly, he thought, to the too open expression of religious feeling on the part of some others, but due also very largely—he thought generally—to the difficulty of expressing that which most profoundly affected them. He was persuaded in this way their ministers often suffered deep loss, because they were left very largely to guess what was deepest in the hearts of their hearers. They didn't always feel quite sure they would find a response of necessary sympathy; and sometimes the preacher was chilled, and fell back on topics of less interest than those which affected the deepest life of man. This was a temptation to which every preacher was sometimes liable, and it was a temptation to which they were

bound to resist. They were bound to seek in earnest and humble prayer that they should believe in their fellow-creatures, and that they should speak in perfect simplicity the deepest and truest things which God might put into their hearts to speak. If they were able to strengthen only one single soul, they would come to their service with increased pleasure, and, through that very pleasure, they would be able to help forward in the spiritual life the hearts of those before them. There were those who did not enter deeply into spiritual life when they came to their places of worship. They loved to hear more controversial topics, hear themselves exalted above others; and did not enter largely into the deeper things of the spirit. They seemed to think they had outgrown spiritual things; but to have outgrown anything in religion was possible only by acquiring a deeper and more profound spiritual faith (hear, hear). It was possible to dwindle out of spiritual things, but it was not possible to grow out of them. The preacher of the gospel must never lower himself in order to meet this kind of supposed scepticism. He was quite satisfied that deep within the souls of the most sceptical people there was still the spirit of love to be touched; there was still the fire of the faith to be rekindled out of the smoking flax; and unless the preacher possessed some little power—and that power would be given to him if he sought it—then the rekindling of what was best and finest in his fellow-men would be accomplished, or he was not fit for the calling he had adopted. Speaking to those who came to listen to the preacher, he said, if a man was to address them in this lofty tone, with an assured faith, wide sympathy, and tender love, he must have time to seek for those things; and they must not let his life be frittered away in various kinds of external activities, which, however valuable in themselves, were not his peculiar work, and must seriously lower the spirit which he would bring before them when they met together on a Sunday. The true minister asked them to give him time within his study, that he may, with perfect collectedness of mind and devout self-surrender, prepare for his Sunday duties. Then the minister should cultivate the power of speaking lovingly and kindly to their young people (hear, hear). There were many amongst them whose souls were deeply stirred within them, who longed for sympathy, but did not know where to find it. Let them welcome their young people, and they would, he believed, heartily respond to the appeals made to them, and derive strength for the growing temptations and thickening of the battle of life. In conclusion, the rev. gentleman said the one aim of their churches was to cultivate the love of Christ amongst mankind, and to raise the hearts of their hearers so that they with Christ might be consecrated to God and become his children (applause).

The Rev. V. D. DAVIS followed, and said the subject under discussion was of the most vital importance to them all. The spiritual life, which they wished to have deepened, was the life for which their churches existed. It was the meaning of the Church that it should cultivate the inward life with God, and strengthen those who were gathered into it; and for the manifestation of that life with God in the world. If there were in their churches a lack of that demonstration of the spirit; if they found that a church did not grow; that there was a defect in its inward life, what ought they to do?

Let them put themselves in a right attitude before God, and ask him to give them more of his Spirit, and let them strangle every form of self-sufficiency. They had to put out of their hearts every form of jealousy and evil temper. When they were discussing religious questions they had to put from them the bitterness and often bad blood of controversy, and in the management of their churches there were things done and said of the most dreadful irreverent character which were utterly contrary to the spirit of the Church. If only they took into consideration that it was a church of God, for the worship of God, such things would be impossible. It had also been said in the papers, and they all felt in their hearts, that the Church was for worship; they gathered for the worship of God to strengthen in themselves the spirit of prayer. If the preaching in the church did not quicken the spirit of prayer, it was nothing. It was out of the inward spirit that the whole life was spiritualised, sanctified, and made productive of good. Mr. Addis had pleaded with them to pay more attention to the vital import of the devout life, the inward life of God, to feel that the devotional part of the service was the breath of its life; to see that in our hearts and in our secret life we had prayer with God, and it was not a strange mystical thing that we were asking and seeking for ourselves, but the natural breath of life. In human fellowship there was the strength of this inward life. It was not in solitude, it was not in the life of the ascetic, or anchorite. The strength of their churches was in human fellowship. It was the spirit which they all understood, which would live and grow if they were true to it. That was the meaning of Christ; that was his power in human life. That was a definite revelation. They had to be true to Christ's spirit which was within them, and it was a spirit which led to prayer. That was the one thing he had to say in respect to this subject. They had to believe in God. They said he was present in their churches, and they had to believe this, and then to learn to pray, and they would not have to trouble about what the world said of them.

The Rev. A. L. SMITH said that, in order to do their work in the world as churches, it was necessary to possess this spiritual life, or rather to be possessed by it.

Mr. JAMES R. BEARD said he wished to give an illustration of the opposite side to one of the remarks made by Dr. Drummond. That gentleman was very emphatic that we could not expect our ministers to preach to us so as to give their best spiritually unless they were content that they should have leisure and time to prepare themselves in spirit for their addresses. As against that he only wished to say that in his district he knew the three ministers who had, he thought, the most powerful effect spiritually on their congregations of anyone he knew, and these men were also the three hardest workers in philanthropy, in education, and in all other organisations connected in their churches. (Loud applause.)

The Rev. W. BLAZEY read an extract from a letter written to him by Sir James Clarke Lawrence, in which that gentleman said that the deepening of their spiritual life could not be furthered by mere philosophical speculation which, however appreciable by the intellect, failed to touch the heart or conscience which was the chief object of all preaching, or should be so regarded.

The Rev. GEORGE BOROS strongly urged

that the churches should not let one of their young men go out into life without confirming them in their religion. Nothing was more important in their religious life than the confirmation of their children and young men. All of them must know the fundamental points of their religion, and he hoped soon to see published a book which would be accepted by all ministers, and from which they might teach young men about to enter life. Another point he would recommend was the carrying religion after their young men, especially those who entered the universities, in some such way as by creating homes for young men in the universities or other high educational institutions.

The Rev. J. E. MANNING also added a few words, advocating a common agreement as to their beliefs.

The Conference then adjourned for luncheon.

The Conference re-assembled at 2.30, under the presidency of HERBERT BRAMLEY, Esq., and again the Hall was filled.

MINISTERIAL SUPERANNUATION.

This was the subject down for discussion, and the CHAIRMAN, in stating the fact, said it was one of great importance to ministers. He did not know, he said, how some of them managed to exist on the stipends eked out to them, and if anything could be done to improve the lot of those who were no longer able to work it should be done. He trusted that something would be suggested, and would result in benefit to their aged and needy ministers.—The following paper was then read:—

THE SUPERANNUATION OF MINISTERS. BY J. COGAN CONWAY, ESQ.

I HAVE been asked to read a paper to-day on the question of the provision of pensions for ministers in their old age, to enable them to retire after a long life spent in active work, when the bodily and mental powers are worn out by constant use.

This is a question which is attracting a great deal of attention at the present day, in most departments of life, and in none is there greater need for its discussion than in that of the ministry of the churches represented in this Conference. I am not indifferent to the higher and nobler considerations which prompt a man to enter that ministry, but like everything else, it has its financial and business side, and regarded from that point of view, it is not a paying profession; there are but few prizes in it, and even these are not very big. As a rule, ours has been accurately described as a frugal ministry. We all of us find that the necessary expenses of daily life have an inevitable tendency to increase, and a Unitarian minister with three boys and two girls is no exception to the rule. An average minister in our churches finds the struggle to maintain himself and family in decency and comfort hard enough without sparing anything for provision for old age. Indeed, there is nothing to spare. The latest available statistics I know of relating to the matter are those given by Mr. Rawson in his paper at the Liverpool Conference in 1882, which led to the foundation of the Sustentation Fund. According to these figures, out of 253 returns to enquiries, there were 171 ministerial salaries of under £200 a year, and there were only eighty-two above that figure. We may take it, I think, that things are, for the purposes of the subject under consideration, pretty much the same now, notwithstanding the efforts that have been made to increase salaries by the Augmentation and Sustentation Funds, and I fear there is little prospect, at all events in the immediate future, of an increase in the rate of stipends in the smaller congregations among which the majority of these slender incomes are found. Population has a tendency to gravitate towards large centres; and while it is most important that small country congregations should be maintained, not only for the sake of the spiritual nourishment of their members, but also for the valuable function they discharge as feeders for the larger centres, it would be deceiving ourselves to expect much

increase amongst them. The very success of a minister in rousing and stimulating the faculties of the youth of his congregation in a small rural place is likely to strengthen the attraction for the youth of larger towns and a wider scope for their energies and abilities, so that, from a narrow and superficial point of view, the most faithful service may seem to be crowned with the least success. Meanwhile, the minister is expected to maintain a certain position, the claims upon him, independent of his household and personal expenses, are often great, and out of an income of less than £200 a year, it is not possible, even with the greatest economy, to set aside a sum sufficient to furnish provision for retirement when the time shall come when the 'strong hours indignant' have 'work'd their wills,' and the man is left worn out with length of service in the cause of religion. The position of such a man may often well be most painful.

Conscious of fading strength and failing powers, he feels he ought, in justice to himself as well as to his congregation, to relax his efforts and seek retirement, and yet, if he does, he knows not where to look for daily bread. The congregation is too small and poor to be able to afford a pension for him as well as a stipend for a successor, and this consideration may well act as a restraint upon them in expressing any sense of the desirability of retirement which they may feel. If the minister himself has this feeling, you may depend upon it that his congregation shares it. Probably they have been thinking it for a long time; it would occur to them long before it would occur to him; yet what can the congregation do? They feel that they cannot go to their minister and tell him plainly it is time for him to retire, because they know as well as he does that he has no income to retire on; and they do not see, any more than he does, how such an income is to be provided for him. So what do they do? They generally cut the Gordian knot by doing nothing. They absent themselves from the chapel, perhaps, as a gentle kind of hint, and this only makes matters worse. The services become all the duller and tamer in consequence, and the aged minister more depressed and depressing. No one dares to face the facts and ask the minister to retire, because they know that this means to doom him to a life of penury or perhaps of dependence on the charity of his relatives.

That such cases are possible no one can dispute, that they actually happen no one widely conversant with the inner history of our churches will deny; they are not only injurious both to pastors and people, but they are injurious also to the Church at large, to our 'one Church in many places,' for when one member suffers, all the members suffer, and it is not to the credit of the Church, or the group of Churches, of which in many ways we have such good reason to be proud, that they should be possible.

Faithful service for forty years at very moderate remuneration would surely seem to constitute a claim upon the Church at large for provision for declining years. The service has been rendered not merely to the individual congregation or congregations, but to the general cause as well, to the Church as a whole. It is to this the life has been given, and common gratitude dictates that in return the Church should undertake the care of its 'evening gray.'

In the Army, the Navy, and the Civil Service, the State insists on compulsory retirement at a definite age, on a pension. I do not advocate anything of a compulsory nature, but only that where retirement is desirable on the attainment of a definite age, it should be made possible by the provision of some general system of superannuation, or pension, or retiring allowance.

The need is recognised, and more or less met, in other religious communions. In the Church of England, an incumbent who retires in consequence of age divides the income with his successor. I do not know that this works very well, and certainly it is not a plan that would succeed in our case. Among the Congregationalists there is a Pastors' Retiring Fund, for the purpose of facilitating the retirement of Congregational ministers from the pastorate when no longer able, by reason of age or infirmity, efficiently to discharge its duties, with an invested capital of £135,000 which made grants in 1895 of about £6000 to 160 annuitants. Ministers eligible to receive aid must be accredited pastors of not less than sixty years of age, who have been engaged in the work of the ministry for not less than twenty-five years. The annuity voted to each minister is not to exceed £50, nor raise the entire income of the annuitant above £150, except in special cases

with which six-sevenths of the managers present at a General Meeting have power to deal.

There is also an Aged Ministers' Society, founded in 1818, with the object of relieving Protestant Dissenting ministers of the Presbyterian, Independent, and Baptist denominations in England and Wales who have resigned pastoral office through age and infirmity. The income of this society is about £1000, and it makes grants varying in amount from £10 to £15. Our own communion shares in the benefits derived from this Society.

There are also special funds for assisting Congregational Ministers of twenty-five years' standing and over sixty years of age, Pastors' Insurance Aid, and Widows' Fund Societies.

Among the Baptists, there is an Annuity Fund for Retired Ministers and Ministers' Widows and Orphans, raised by voluntary donations and subscriptions of beneficiary members. These last pay annual subscriptions of from £1 ls. to £3 3s., according to age (25 to 60), together with entrance fees of from £3 to £81 from the ages of 46 to 60, but no entrance fee is payable before the age of 46 in order to secure an annuity of £15. A member may secure additional annuities, not to exceed seven in all, at the same rates. Thus, the lowest rate for an annuity of £105 would be £7 7s. a year, if membership is commenced at the age of twenty-five. Or, single payments may be made of from £20 15s. to £92, also according to age. To secure Widows' and Orphans' Benefit the rate is higher. Additions are made to those annuities from the Voluntary Fund contributions. A beneficiary member must have subscribed three years to receive benefit. After that, if he is incapacitated, or retires at sixty-five, he is entitled to his annuity.

Among the Primitive Methodists there are two distinct sources whence superannuation allowances are made—the Itinerant Preachers' Friendly Society, which is conducted on strict business principles, and the Superannuated Preachers' Widows' and Orphans' Fund, which is intended to supplement it. The first is a Benefit Society for members only, and the subscription is £5 10s. per annum, in addition to an entrance fee. The annuities vary, according to the years of membership, from £7 to £30. For widows the annuities vary according to the years of the husband's membership, from £5 to £20. I notice that unsoundness in doctrine is a ground of expulsion from the Society. The other Fund is also for the benefit only of members, but the minimum subscription is small—ten shillings a year. The Fund is supported by voluntary contributions of various kinds, and its grants vary, according to the number of years a minister has 'travelled,' from £8 to £40. A widow's allowance about half that of a minister.

Among our own churches the principle of superannuation is conceded, and the attempt to meet the need is mainly made by three Societies—the Aged and Infirm Protestant Dissenting Ministers' Society, of which I have spoken, the Widows' Fund, in connection with the Provincial Assembly of Lancashire and Cheshire, and the Ministers' Benevolent Society.

From the first, only three English Presbyterian Ministers receive benefit at present, according to the last report. The Widows' Fund is confined to Lancashire and Cheshire, and is regarded as a private Benefit Society, no details being made public. Outsiders have an impression that it is a fortunate and flourishing society, but the grounds for this impression are only gossip and conjecture. The Ministers' Benevolent Society, which has its headquarters at Birmingham, was founded in 1852, to afford relief to such Unitarian Christian ministers in Great Britain as from age or infirmity may be prevented from discharging the public duties of their office; and for the aid of the widows and families of any such ministers as may be left without adequate means of support, and extends its operations over the whole country. Its benefits are confined to beneficiary members and their families; to become a beneficiary member a minister must be under forty-five years of age; he must pay an entrance fee of a guinea and an annual subscription of a guinea for twenty years, or one payment of fifteen guineas. No benefit on the ground of age can be received until the member has reached sixty-five, and no one can claim benefit from the society as of right. The grants are made at the discretion of the Board of Directors. The society has an invested capital of £30,000, and an annual income from interest on these investments, together with subscriptions, of about £1600. It made grants, according to the last report, of £1450 to fourteen

retired or incapacitated ministers, and twenty-one widows, in amounts varying from £20 to £70.

Thus, leaving aside the Aged Ministers' Society, which at present, as I have said, only assists three of our ministers, we find this state of things: a minister outside Lancashire and Cheshire who is now over forty-five years of age, has no possible chance of securing any pension or superannuation allowance whatever, unless he is already a subscriber to the Ministers' Benevolent Society, and even then, admirable as is the work done by this valuable institution, he has no certainty that he will receive a grant; he cannot claim one as of right, and if he gets one, the average amount of the grant is, roughly speaking, about £40 a year, so that, under the most favourable circumstances, all he can look for on his retirement, unless he has private means, which few of our ministers have, is something less than a pound a week.

Is this right? Is this fulfilling the duty which the Church surely owes to her faithful servants? Does it furnish adequate provision for the support of the declining years of ministers who have earned retirement by long and loyal service?

There can be but one answer, No! Something more is needed which shall at least double these retiring allowances, and something, too, which shall give to faithful ministers at sixty-five years of age, a claim and a right to an annuity, providing they have been contributors to the Fund themselves.

These two points—that the minister should himself subscribe to the Fund during his active years, and that he should have a right to an allowance on his retirement from age or infirmity, provided his ministry has been faithful, should, I think, be integral parts of any scheme that may be devised.

Men over forty-five should be allowed an opportunity of joining, but they should be charged, as in the case of the Baptist Fund, a higher rate.

To secure this no new Fund is necessary. The needless multiplication of Funds is an evil, and there exists already, as I have indicated, an organisation, the Ministers' Benevolent Society, which only requires a slight modification of its laws and a larger measure of pecuniary support from the churches to accomplish all that is desired. All that is really wanted is that the Church at large should realise the need and respond to it, pour out its treasures large and small, the widow's mite no less than the rich man's massive gift. It would be a peculiarly appropriate celebration for our Church to make of the Queen's Long Reign to ensure the comfort of the evening of its prophets' days, to relieve the anxiety that must weigh upon the heart of many a pastor as he thinks of what is to happen when his power of work is past, and to cheer the close of many a laborious career.

I now leave this matter in the hands of the Conference in the conviction that, as the Liverpool Conference led to the establishment of the Sustentation Fund and to increased support of the Rawdon Fund, as the Birmingham Conference dealt with our Literature, and the Leeds Conference with Organisation, so the Sheffield Conference will take up and put on a sound and secure basis this most important question of Ministerial Superannuation.

MR. DAVID MARTINEAU (London) opened the discussion by remarking that the subject before them had a great charm for him, as he took much interest in the status of their Unitarian ministers. He thought that every man who undertook work for the public ought to be recompensed fairly, decently and respectably, so that he might carry it on without anxiety as to his pecuniary position. Having pointed out the necessity for dealing with the subject from an actuarial point of view, and having shown that the difficulty was not met by merely life insurance, he said it was for the Conference to consider carefully whether they were agreed in thinking that some scheme of superannuation amongst their ministers was desirable. If so, he would like to suggest the appointment of a committee of persons who might be best fitted by experience and personal inclination to examine into this question in all its details, and prepare a report to be

submitted to the Conference committee. If the Conference preferred, they might leave the committee to delegate the matter to a sub-committee, who should be men well fitted for that purpose. In turn the committee might bring the whole matter before the Unitarian public in a practical and desirable way.

The Rev. J. C. STREET, of Birmingham, said he had been requested by the Board of Directors of the Ministers' Benevolent Society to attend and make a few suggestions to the Conference. He had feared that the proposal was to establish some new organisation, and form a new and separate fund, but he was glad to gather that this was not the case. As a matter of fact, they had a society which was trying to meet the needs of ministers who had laboured for many years, and were unable to labour any longer. The Ministers' Benevolent Society had a capital of £30,000, which had been contributed mainly by provincial and pious laymen, and was open to membership to any of the ministers in Great Britain, but not to the ministers of Ireland. The fund had been established since 1852, and he would like to correct an impression which seemed to exist in the minds of some friends, that there were ministers who had broken down in health, and who had been members of the fund, who had not been able to secure provision from that fund. As a matter of fact, no minister who was a member of that fund, and whose case was a genuine one, had ever been refused help. Unfortunately, the membership of the Society was not co-extensive with the ministry of the United Kingdom. In the first place, Lancashire and Cheshire had not joined the fund to any extent, because they were already provided for, and in the next place, ministers over 45 years of age were not eligible. Further, there appeared to be among their young ministers a lack of knowledge of the existence of the Society, so that the membership was limited in a greater degree than they deemed it ought to be. Their resources, however, were small, and if their memberships were increased to any extent, they would find the funds lacking. He might say that they did not limit their grants to £20, £30 or even £50. In some special cases their grants had been larger still, and were always and only measured by the resources at their disposal. He would like to point out that the superannuation of ministers was only a small part of the subject with which the Benevolent Fund had to deal. The Society provided not only grants for aged ministers, but for their widows and children, if they were unfortunate enough to leave any, and they wished to impress on the Conference the necessity of providing, not only a Superannuation Fund, but a fund for making provision for widows and orphans, for the poorly paid minister was often quite unable to make such provision. It seemed to him that a practical suggestion to be made that afternoon would be that they should appoint that day a committee of competent and affluent laymen, along with the directors of the Ministers' Benevolent Society, to see whether it was not practicable to raise the £30,000, which was now the capital sum of that body, to £100,000, in this Jubilee year, and whether along with that, it was not practicable to extend the membership of the Society to all members of all their Free Churches, no matter what their age or subscription might be. He ventured to think that the suggestion was one worthy

of that great Conference, and of such a subject. If that sum were raised, they would no longer have the painful details put before them from quarter to quarter when appeals were made from broken down ministers, or their widows and children, left without any provision whatever.

MR. E. CAPLETON, of London, was desirous of striking a different keynote, and wished to advance three propositions. He wished, first, to point out that the incomes of their ministers, bad as they will be, were not, in comparison with the incomes of the rest of the community, anything out of the ordinary. Secondly, he would say that the number of the rich are too few for them to depend on their contributions for a permanent fund. Thirdly, if they appealed to the widow for her mite and to the rank and file of the churches for their mites, then, inasmuch as there was an equal need for superannuation, there should be an equal benefit; and the best thing their ministers could do was not to attempt to make a class for themselves on this great subject, but join hand in hand with the proletariat and working millions of the country and try to work out a superannuation scheme, and thus bring the charity of the first century into line with that of the nineteenth century, make first century charity into the nineteenth century co-operation. If they waited for the Government to take up this matter, they might have to wait fifty years. This could be done by the churches if they would only realise the possibilities of themselves, joined hand in hand, forming a superannuation fund of their own to which clergy and laity would subscribe, and upon which all should have a claim. The thing might be done and done well. There is sympathy and pity in his soul for poor ministers, but there was also pity for the poor people who went out of their churches and were lost to them because they could not pay their subscriptions. Let them take up this great question and the working classes would feel that their religion was a practical thing.

The Rev. J. M. WHITEMAN (Eastbourne), who was for eight years in the Primitive Methodist ministry, said it was quite true that unsoundness of doctrine was a disqualification for membership; but, although that was so, a member expelled had every penny he had paid to the Superannuation Fund recouped to him with interest. (Hear, hear.) He stated, however, that the increasing subscriptions the ministers had to pay pressed very heavily upon them, especially upon those who were only poorly paid. (Hear, hear.) Alluding to the best course open to them he said it seemed to him that there must be some subscription incumbent upon all members, and there should be an age limit.

MR. F. TAYLOR (Bolton) urged the desirability of steps being taken in the way that had been suggested. They were all convinced that the pecuniary position of their ministers was not such as to enable them to make any provision either for sickness or old age. It was most desirable that some committee should be appointed to take this matter into serious consideration, and he moved:—“That this conference recommends that earnest efforts should be made by congregations and individuals to increase their subscription to the Ministers' Benevolent Society; and that a committee be appointed to confer with the directors of that Society, and take such action in relation to the superannuation of our ministers as they consider desirable; and that the committee

consist of Messrs. John Harwood, David Martineau, F. Nettlefold, D. Ainsworth, E. Lawrence, M.P., W. Blake Odgers, Q.C., Charles Fenton, and Frank Taylor, and such gentlemen as they may invite to join their number.'

Mr. J. R. BEARD, in seconding the motion, said he thought the names of the committee were such as would give the Conference full assurance that this matter would not be shelved, but would be dealt with in a practical manner. (Applause.)

The CHAIRMAN, in putting the motion, urged their congregations at once to endeavor to increase the list of their subscribers.

The resolution was carried unanimously.

THE BEST MEANS OF RECRUITING OUR MINISTRY.

BY THE REV J. E. MANNING, M.A.

The Rev. J. E. MANNING, M.A. (Sheffield), then read the following paper on 'The Means of Recruiting our Ministry':—

I AM sure you will all regret, with me, the cause which has put the responsibility of this paper into my hands. Mr. Dowson was to have spoken to you on the best means of recruiting our ministry, and, doubtless, his ripe experience would have enabled him to put the matter before you more completely than I can hope to do. His illness, however, prevented him from preparing his paper, and I must do the best I can. I am sure you will all join with me in wishing Mr. Dowson a speedy recovery.

The question which arose in my thoughts, when the subject was proposed to me, was, 'Does our ministry stand in urgent need of recruiting?' One has always got an uneasy feeling that there are more men waiting for pulpits than there are pulpits for them to occupy. With this feeling uppermost, I examined the Essex Hall Year Book for 1897, and I found, if this book is a true criterion, that there are not so many ministers waiting for pulpits as I imagined. During the last ten years, 112 ministers have settled among us, the average supply being thus eleven per annum. There were, at the end of 1896, eleven pulpits vacant. But there were, according to the Year Book, seventeen persons without pulpits, and ready to take charge. I don't know how this compares with former years, and, of course, numbers taken in this way are not a very safe guide; but I presume the supply is somewhat in excess of the demand.

Of these 112 ministers, twenty-six were educated at Manchester College, twenty-five at the Home Missionary College, five at the Home Missionary College and Manchester College, nine at Carmarthen, three at Carmarthen and Manchester College. Twenty-five came to us from other denominations, being converts to Unitarianism; nineteen have become ministers from special circumstances, without passing through a theological college; some from our own denomination, some from other denominations. In addition to these, there are eight lay preachers on the list, being only a small portion of the many lay preachers who do excellent work for our cause.

But, though the supply appears to be somewhat in excess of the demand, the question still remains, 'How are we to get the best men for the ministry?' A church that has a message is always in need of good preachers—men who can speak with power the word God has put into their hearts; and our Unitarian Church needs now as much as ever—nay, more than ever—men who can preach our gospel with living enthusiasm, and put it convincingly before the world. Though there is a constant supply of recruits for our pulpits, both from our colleges and from the outside, there is also a constant leakage going on. Some of our students, who pass through the whole or part of the college curriculum, never take a pulpit; some drop out after a few years' ministry, and are never heard of again; some go to the Established Church (but none, so far as I know,

to the ministry of the Orthodox Dissenting Churches, or to the priesthood of the Roman Catholic Church); some leave the ministry altogether for other pursuits, having found, in time, that the ministry is not their vocation. In like manner, of those who come to us from other denominations, a certain proportion find in time their home among us uncongenial. Some find us too cold; others too hot. Some find that we are too restricted, and some that we are too free. They came to us with a preconceived ideal, and find they made a mistake. Some certainly do not find the Unitarian Church a Garden of Eden, or its pulpit a bed of roses; and others are surprised to discover that they have not the liberty, or the license, they expected to enjoy in it. They go; and occasionally they leave disaster behind them. Our congregations are much to blame in such cases. They elect a minister with the foresight and the wisdom of sheep; and then they blame the man they elect, rather than themselves for electing him. They knew, practically, nothing about him. They were captivated by his preaching, or by his cheapness. The result is catastrophe, and perhaps the next thing we hear is that the place is closed.

As a set-off to this, of those who have come to us from other denominations some are among our most successful and energetic ministers.

My paper will deal briefly with two special subjects: (1) the kind of men we want for our ministry, and (2) the best means of getting them.

I. It is not easy to define the kind of men we want. A minister, to be all that is expected of him, ought to possess all the virtues and all the accomplishments that adorn humanity. But short of heroic perfection, we want men of good character and of good intellectual ability. We want, also, men who are devoted to the work of the ministry, and we want good preachers.

It is not always possible to predict whether a youth will prove a good preacher. It is astonishing what a few years' training may do for him in this respect. I have known men with apparently very modest abilities in a short time disclose excellent powers as preachers, showing unexpected gifts of extemporaneous speech and extemporaneous prayer; while some who appeared to have special gifts at first never seem to rise above their early promise. It is for our colleges to refine and polish the raw material, and they ought to pay special attention to training for the work of the pulpit. Some of our students are turned out into the world so learned and so dry, and with so little understanding of the preacher's function, that our congregations cannot endure them. After listening to, or slumbering through, an hour's discourse on some abstruse question of philosophy, which touches them rather more remotely, perhaps, than the North Pole, they are glad to turn to someone else less learned, it may be, but who can preach to them the simple truths of the Gospel of life. I maintain that our colleges, whatever else they do, ought to fit their alumni to be preachers. Our congregations want preachers, and the art of preaching can be taught.

Apart from this essential qualification, which cannot always be justly estimated in the youth, what other qualifications ought we to look for in him, if he is to be a worthy and efficient minister?

The youth who will make a good minister is reverent, modest, unselfish, willing to help. He feels that life was not given to him entirely for his own pleasure, but considers himself bound to devote some of his powers and energies for the benefit of others, and for helping mankind. He will give some of his spare time to work in the Sunday-school, in the Mission, in classes for the poor. He is naturally drawn to philanthropic work, and feels himself instinctively impelled to take an interest in whatever has for its aim the ameliorating of human life in its moral, religious, spiritual, and social aspects. He is earnest, hopeful, tender to the weak and the aged; he is not unwilling to sacrifice self for the necessities of others. The grace of God is with him. All this is not incompatible with abundant animal spirits, a lively sense of humour, and thorough enjoyment of all innocent pleasures. We want men active, bright,

intelligent, physically healthy and vigorous. There is hard work in store for any man who is to be at the head of a congregation that is thoroughly alive. We want men who can work, and endure hardness. For there is no minister worth his salt who will not have to fight the good fight of faith.

One excellent means of recruiting our ministry is for ministers, superintendents of Sunday-schools, and organisers of our church life generally, to be on the look out for young men who exhibit qualities indicating a natural fitness, and, if necessary, to encourage them to take up the ministry as their work in life. This would ensure that the candidates for our ministry are known and, to some extent, tried even before they enter college, and would be a guarantee of stability of character and seriousness of intention.

Every minister is consulted by young men who think they have 'a call' to the ministry. Some think they have great gifts and want to shine; but they have no genuine love of the work, and weary of the drudgery in process of time. Some have the power of slow plodding work, but have not the qualifications, mental or other, that make a useful minister. Some have many admirable gifts but lack patience; or they have no tact, no common sense. It is only by actual experience of a youth's capacities, by seeing what he can do, and by knowing him in daily life, that anyone, even with deepest insight into character, can judge whether he has qualifications which justify him in becoming a candidate for the ministry.

II. This leads me to my second point—How to get the best men.

I think the desire to enter the ministry usually comes spontaneously, and there is no holier moment in a young man's life than when, with many misgivings of his own fitness, but urged by an impulse he cannot resist, he vows that he will devote himself to the service of God, and of his fellow-men. And unless some such impulse comes to him, he should hesitate long before he is induced to take to the ministry as a profession. Nevertheless, the aid of friends may sometimes be beneficial, and give an impetus to modest hesitancy and doubt. I have consulted a number of ministers of various churches—Roman Catholic, Wesleyan, Independent, Baptist and others—and I find it universally agreed that the initial desire to enter the ministry should come from the youth himself; but that where special qualifications present themselves, suggestion and direct appeal may be advantageously employed. A youth is sometimes reluctant to express openly his desire, who, with a little sympathetic encouragement, would be found eager to take to the ministry as his proper calling. Why should not parents put it seriously to their sons (of course, I mean in cases where they have seen indications of natural fitness), whether it would not be well for them to think of the ministry as a career in life? I know that parents have sometimes done so, and have met with no encouragement; but I know, also, of men who in after life have expressed regret that when they were young and hesitated through consciousness of deficiency they had no encouragement to put into effect a secret desire. And others I have known, who felt the whole atmosphere of their surroundings totally opposed to any wish of the kind on their part; who would, moreover, have had to encounter strenuous opposition had they shown any leaning towards the ministry. Worldliness is, unfortunately, as common among Unitarians as among the rest of Christendom. Our young men are encouraged to go into business, or to the law, or to the medical profession, but few are urged to the ministry. There is no doubt they can make larger incomes in any of these spheres than they can in the ministry. And it is quite true that our Unitarian Church has no prizes to offer in the way of rich livings, or of distinguished position. But surely for the highest purposes for which a man can live, the ministry affords a sphere of work second to none; for no sphere gives greater opportunity for usefulness, and for the devotion of self to the noblest ends. I know of no sphere of life in which the best capacities of a man, intellectual or other, can have a wider field. And as to opportunities for well-doing,

they are simply illimitable—or limited only by lack of means to use them. If a minister has business capacity, he will find he can use it to the best purposes in organising the work of his own congregation, or in the wider range of his public duties. All his energy, all his zeal, all his industry, will find ample scope for their display. His work is sometimes disappointing. He feels at times as if all his devotion to the best things is thrown away. But in spite of everything, the ministry has satisfactions which no other sphere of life affords. It is the privilege of the faithful minister of Christ to guide, to cheer, to encourage, uplift, and strengthen; to bring light to souls that sit in darkness, and new hope to those who have yielded to despair. It is the simple truth, though at times the crushing sense of impotence makes the preacher feel that he is in vain beating the air, that the words of Isaiah are literally fulfilled in him, 'to preach good tidings; to comfort all that mourn; to give unto them beauty for ashes, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.'

And let me not leave quite unnoticed other advantages which the ministry affords. There are few spheres of life which present more opportunities for a man to follow up any special work he may wish to devote himself to, literature in all its phases, science, or whatever his special taste may be. The minister who knows how to economise his time can find, even the busiest may find it,—opportunity to gratify his desire, if not to the full, at least to an extent which is impossible in other professions. Would it not be well, if the fathers and mothers of the leading families in our congregations, instead of urging their sons to ambitious views of wealth and position, would quietly lay before them the prospect of the ministry as a career, and when they see indications of the right qualifications, and note the disposition forming, to urge them to join the ranks adorned and glorified by the names of Priestley, Channing, Theophilus Lindsay, Theodore Parker, Yates, Madge, Tayler, Beard, Gaskell, Thom, Sadler (names written in God's Book of Life), not to mention other names, both of the revered dead, and of those still living among us? Is not the career one which will afford scope for the best capacities of the best we have? Is it not one to which an earnest youth may feel that he is worthily devoting all his powers, in that he is using them in the most sacred service possible to a human being—the service of God and man? Our young men have constantly before their eyes the advantages of the secular life, a successful business career, the profits of a lucrative profession. From their earliest years the desirability of such a life is impressed upon them. How seldom are warnings given against selfish ideals, how hesitatingly is the truth enforced that 'a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.' Ignatius Loyola won his most devoted disciple, Francis Xavier, who was ambitious, and at first desirous only of worldly fame, by reiterating, with solemn persistency, 'What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, but lose his own soul?' I do not believe that our young people are more deaf than others to the voice of unselfish devotion, nor do I believe that they are devoid of generous impulses. And I feel convinced that if fathers and mothers would put seriously before their boys the intrinsic excellence of the ministerial career as a life of usefulness and helpfulness, wherein all that is best in a man's nature will find ample scope for development, the appeal would not be made in vain. A minister's life is necessarily full of self-denials; but it has also much quiet happiness, and is an unlimited sphere for well-doing.

But, as a correspondent* writes to me, 'The honour and the joy of stately ministering to the Church of Christ would seem to have been awarded, in every age, chiefly to the less favoured as regards outward good—an instance of blessed compensation.' The largest supply of candidates for our ministry will inevitably come from the rank and file of our congregations, from the minister's family, and from workers in the Sunday-school. Here our ministers and superintendents may do much to direct and encourage those in whom they have

noticed qualifications that mark them out for the ministerial career. The spirit bloweth where it listeth, and from all ranks of our congregations we must look for men to supply our pulpits. Our congregations, especially in the large towns, consist of every class of the community, and of every condition of culture—working men and manufacturers, professional men, employers of labour, clerks, shopkeepers, merchants—and from the families of this mixed multitude we must look for recruits. There ought to be in all our Churches systematic teaching of the young people in the principles of religion, of morals, in the history of Christianity, and in the history and principles of our own Unitarian Church. Our young people should be taught the meaning of our isolation, and to understand the historical and spiritual basis of their faith in its plainness and simplicity. They ought to be told through what struggles and martyrdoms and heroic faithfulness on the part of the fathers of our Church we hold our present position in the religious world; they ought to be so instructed as to see the golden light of conscience illuminating the whole course of our history. I confess that the results of my own efforts in this direction have not been as encouraging as I could wish; but I have persistently kept up the 'Minister's Class,' however small the numbers that attended it, and I think, nay, I am sure, it has not been without good fruit. By means of a class of this kind, a minister comes into intimate relation with the young people about him, and [he is able thus to gauge their powers, intellectual and religious. He will see some who are in every way well fitted to do good work in the ministry; and when this is the case, let him put it affectionately and sympathetically before them. Some will have other views; some will have entire distrust of themselves; and one or two will find in his words the spur they needed. I think, also, a minister may with advantage speak to parents about the ministry as a career for their boys. Some will certainly turn a deaf ear, and some 'will think about it.' But here and there the suggestion will be gladly entertained. Why should not the minister preach occasionally on the good a young man may do in the ministry, and so encourage any latent desire into active determination?

I once heard a sermon preached from the pulpit of St. Mary's Church, Oxford, the design of which was to encourage young men to take orders in the Church. There was a large number of graduates and undergraduates present, and the sermon was upon the Athanasian Creed. The preacher said he understood that the damnable clauses were a stumbling-block to many, and stood in the way of some who would otherwise enter the Church as a profession. This was welcome news to me, as it showed good sense and thoughtfulness on the part of the young men. But the preacher went on to say that the objectionable clauses really meant nothing at all. *Salvus* was nothing more than 'sound' in the faith, and not even the most scrupulously conscientious could object to declare that he who would be sound in the faith must 'thus believe.' Moreover, *absque dubio in eternum peribit*—without doubt he shall perish everlastingly—meant nothing more than that a man would remain unsound in the faith for ever unless he believed as the Creed enjoined. It was a most delightful piece of special pleading; but I devoutly hoped that, for the sake of his sanity, no young man present would be induced to enter the Church by the preacher's words.

Happily, in our Unitarian Church, we have nothing to explain away in this fashion, for we have no written creed which any youth is compelled to subscribe. All that a minister ought to do in urging the young to enter our ministry is to lay before them the greatness of the work in its religious aspects, the possibility there is of doing good, and the personal blessedness of devoting self to the service of God and man. In the Sunday-school, in the mutual improvement class, in the Bible class, in his own special class, in private conversation, and in the pulpit, the minister may find many opportunities for discovering and encouraging those who are fitted to undertake the work of the ministry.

I find that in some churches the candidates for the ministry have to go through a much more searching process than our young men—not in the collegiate life, for there the process of probation is much the same, but the preliminaries are more elaborate than with us. When a young man has finally made up his mind to join our ministry, he prepares to pass the entrance examination of the College, gets his references, and, if he successfully passes the former, and the latter prove satisfactory, he proceeds, as a matter of course, to the years of academic training. Compare this with the plan followed by candidates for the ministry in the churches, for example, of the Methodist New Connexion. I am indebted for information on the matter to the Rev. Dr. Crothers, Principal of Rammoor College. He says:—'When a devout and earnest youth shows that he wants to do good, and that he has some qualification for preaching and conducting worship, his name is entered on the "plan" as a preacher on trial for the office, and rule requires that he shall continue on trial for four terms of a quarter of a year each, or as much longer as the Quarterly Meeting of the Circuit may think expedient. At the close of the year he undergoes examination on his religious experience, his knowledge of Christian doctrine, his attachment to the Methodist economy, etc., and, if his statement be satisfactory to the Quarterly Meeting, he is approved as a local preacher fully accredited. If, while discharging his duties as a local preacher, he comes to believe himself to be divinely called to the separate and stated ministry, and his brethren—especially the official brethren of the particular church to which he belongs—are sufficiently in accord with his inward persuasion, his case is submitted to the judgment of several meetings. He must be approved, first, by two-thirds of a meeting composed of the circuit and local preachers of the circuit, and of the stewards and leaders of the church to which he belongs; secondly, he must be approved by a majority of a meeting of the church of which he is a member; thirdly, by two-thirds of a quarterly or special circuit meeting; and, fourthly, by a majority of the district meeting. But the process is not yet ended. He next appears before the college committee, and, if the necessities of the Connexion should require, and his measure of culture and attainment, however acquired, should justify, he is at once received by the Conference on a probation of four years for the regular ministry. Usually, however, after passing the college examination, he is appointed to the college, where he takes a two or three years' course, the third year in college being reckoned as the first year of probation. During probation he is regularly examined, and at its close, if two-thirds of the Conference (composed equally of ministers and lay representatives) are satisfied as to his competence and fitness, he is, to use a familiar phrase, received as "a minister in full connexion."

This method appears to me to have two special advantages among many—first, for the churches, in that it guarantees that a considerable number of people have personal acquaintance with the candidate, not merely his own immediate friends, but a number of others outside his own circle; and, second, for the candidate himself, in that it secures—what is of considerable importance to him when on the look out for a pulpit—that, on coming out of college, he is already well known. We find, in the case of some of our own excellent students, that they have to wait six, twelve, or more months after leaving college before they get a chance to settle down. Their names are not known beyond the college walls, and when, as is frequently the case, they go abroad for a further period of study, they come back almost perfect strangers. Of course, if a man has anything in him, and has not been ground to very fine dust in the academic mill, he soon makes himself known, and, if he is not too exacting in what he takes at first, he will in due time win his spurs, and be called to a more prominent post.

I don't see any clear remedy in our own case, for we are not so elaborately organised as the Church to which I have referred, whose Connexional system necessitates close organic unity.

But there is one thing I may, perhaps, be pardoned for suggesting. It is, that members of the Congregations of the towns in which our colleges are fixed might do something to get to know the students personally. It would be worth their while to invite them sometimes to their houses. Unless a student happens to have friends in the town, he may pass through his collegiate course without ever getting to know, or to be known by, any but his own college set. I remember with pleasure and gratitude the few who made themselves friendly to me in this way in my student days. It was a delightful break in the monotony of my student life. The host got to know the student (raw enough, doubtless), but he or she certainly earned the grateful acknowledgments of the guest.

To sum up what seem to me to be the best practical means of securing suitable men for our ministry:—

(a) Parents may do much, if they will seriously entertain the idea of the ministry as a career for their sons when they see in them signs of fitness for the work. It is a noble profession, and one that will call forth all the best qualities a youth possesses. It is a pity that more of the well-trained youths in our wealthier families do not enter the ministry. There is a great field of usefulness for them, if, remembering that a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things he possesseth, they are willing to devote themselves unselfishly to the unambitious duties of a minister's life. I need hardly point out what advantages a youth who is already fairly well provided for, so far as this world's goods go, has in comparison with one who, with all his desire to be of use in the world, is constantly under the strain of narrow means and a precarious salary.

(b) Ministers may also do much by classes, by sermons, by personal intercourse with their young people to find out those who are fittest, and, when they are found, to direct and encourage them in preparation for their future work. I would emphasise more especially the desirability of impressing upon our young men the purpose for which the Unitarian Church stands, and the circumstances which have brought it to its unique position.

(c) The superintendents and workers in our Sunday-schools can do much by observing those who come under their care, to find out young men who by religious earnestness are naturally fitted for the work, and who, by a proper course of training, may become well-equipped for the ministerial career.

By these means there never need be any lack of recruits for our ministry, recruits who are well known, whose qualities are certified, whose serious intention is unmistakable.

And, now, in conclusion, let me repeat what I said before, that it is vital to our well-being as a Church—vital to the cause for which our Church stands—that we should have a constant supply of well-trained men, who, being devoted to the work, and feeling its sacredness and greatness, shall proclaim to the world unhesitatingly and clearly the simple Gospel of Christ freed from the doctrinal accretions which time has gathered round it. The Christianity of the self-styled orthodox churches of the present day is like the sea-god Glaucus in Plato's allegory of the soul, who, crushed and marred by the action of the waves, can scarcely be distinguished as the azure-god for the stones and shells and tangled sea-weed which cling to him. So, says Plato, the soul, as we know it here, is crushed and marred by its association with the body and every species of evil.

The allegory may be applied to the prevailing doctrines of the Churches. Around the simple Christianity of Jesus disfiguring accretions have grown, and it is for us to restore once more, and to proclaim to the world, the Gospel as it was proclaimed in all its beauty and simplicity—in all its majesty and strength—to the listening multitudes on the hills of Galilee, or by the lake side. We want youths fired with enthusiasm to preach this holy faith again, and to go forth, like Jeremiah, to preach to men, though the word of the Lord was 'a reproach unto him, and a derision daily,' and though, when thwarted and in despair, he said he would make no further mention of God's name, yet

felt His word 'in his heart, as a burning fire shut up in his bones,' and he was weary with forbearing and could not refrain.

The Rev. PHILEMON MOORE, B.A. (Carmarthen), in opening the discussion, said he found himself almost entirely in accord with everything that Mr. Manning had said. He thought they might deal with the question under two heads. There was the question of obtaining recruits for the ministry; and there was the question of retaining them when they had got them. Taking the last question first, he pointed out various causes why young men left them, and coming to the second question, he quoted statistics which presented the matter from a different point to that already given. Out of a total of 371 ministers who were included in the Unitarian Year Book, thirty-seven, or 10 per cent., were sons of Unitarian ministers; sixty-five, representing 17.5 per cent., were proselytes who had been educated in orthodox colleges, and sixty-seven, or 18 per cent. of the whole, had no special education for the ministry. That left 202 of the total to be credited to their churches. In conclusion, he said their ministry was chiefly recruited from their smaller towns, whereas, in his judgment, they should come from larger towns, where they had the advantage of connection with large churches, Sunday-schools, and other institutions. (Applause.)

The Rev. HENRY GOW, who followed, referred to the gloomy outlook which the ministry too often held out to those who entered their body. In other professions, after several years spent at college and in foreign travel, the young man was prepared to work hard for a few years in order that he might build up for himself a competence; but in the ministry the labourer was too often haunted with the fear of a poverty-stricken old age and ultimate appeal to the Benevolent Fund. It was the heroic note which was wanting. This alone would call forth the men they wanted to lead them to greater spiritual and religious success.

Mr. A. W. WORTHINGTON, of Stourbridge, contended that the ministers who were to fill their pulpits in the future must come from their body. He urged rich laymen, as in the Church of England, to encourage those of their children whom they thought fitted to enter the church.

The Rev. J. E. ODGERS, of Oxford, urged the formation of an Academic Board in connection with their churches, to take up the charge of the student at an early age, and, if it was thought desirable, encourage him and support him in a course of study available close to his own home.

The Conference then adjourned.

CONVERSAZIONE.

This very enjoyable function took place on Wednesday evening, being attended by considerably over a thousand persons, including friends from orthodox circles. The assembly took place at the Mappin Art Gallery, Weston Park, the scientific and artistic treasures of which were largely enjoyed, though the musical programme and the delights of social intercourse were the main attractions of the evening. There were no formal speeches, but the guests, after being received by Mr. and Mrs. Michael Hunter and Mr. Herbert Bramley, wandered about at their pleasure, at least as far as the crowded state of the principal halls permitted.

THURSDAY MORNING.

In the devotional service in the Montgomery Hall on Thursday morning, the Rev. J. Edwin Odgers, M.A., and the Rev. W. H. Drummond, B.A., took part. Over the Conference, which opened at 10.30, the Rev. BROOKE HERFORD, D.D., presided, and there was again a good attendance of delegates and friends.

In his opening address the CHAIRMAN said he wished to speak one or two plain words about the scope of their meetings. They gave a good deal of time to the theory of religious life and its influence in the world, but they wanted that morning to take a little stock of what they had been doing during the past three years, and also to have all the suggestions that could be given for doing their work better. They could not, of course, speak of all their work. They left out of consideration all the domestic mission work of their churches, not because it was in any way weaker or poorer work than the work of other churches, but because it was a work in which they simply shared with others. In their city mission work they were simply doing—perhaps a little more simply, here and there, perhaps, with a little more practical wisdom, and here and there a little less (laughter), and a little less confidence than some of the great churches about us. The special work, however, for them to do, which no other could do, or was doing to-day, was that of making a mission to present the larger thoughts to which the freedom of the past had brought their churches; of presenting them in what of Gospel there might be to the unchurched and the unquiet and restless spirits everywhere; and gathering them into worshipping assemblies, not to create doubt, but to build people up into religious life. No other churches were doing this. There were plenty who, in their individual preaching, were doing this, but they were doing it dead in the teeth of the great institutional churches to which they belonged, and when they departed the quiet current of the old life went back very much into its own way. He wished to say a word about the significance of the whole kind of reports they were to have that day about this work amongst their churches. Those of them who were able to look back 50 years, when he first began to take notice of these things, would remember that such a gathering as that of that day would have been impossible amongst them, because, as a body of churches, they were not doing any missionary work except of the very simplest kind. When they began, 50 years ago, there were scattered over the country a number of little associations of book and tract societies. A little while afterwards there grew out of these here and there book societies, which, in their turn, developed into village mission societies. These grew a little later into district associations, which began here and there to do a distinctly larger and clearer work. The next onward stage was that which took place within the last six or seven years, when there were appointed in the larger districts superintendent missionaries, ministers at large, who should be free from the care of a special congregation, and who should have the charge of gathering together the mission work of their district, looking after the weak churches, strengthening them, helping to bring ministers to places where they were in need of them, and generally strengthening and reviving

the work of weaker churches, as well as also planting new ones. They were that day to have short reports from superintendent missionaries of these various districts, who would inform them of the work which had been done during the past three years. He might, in concluding, just mention the Lancashire district, which was founded by Benjamin Glover at Heywood. He remembered well their first effort in that great manufacturing town, where they hardly knew a person in sympathy with them. They announced a course of lectures, and at the first lecture, when the lecturer stood up, there was one person in the hall (laughter). This was not very encouraging (renewed laughter). Mr. Glover and the friends with him, however, waited until they had an audience of five, and to these five they delivered the first lecture. They would agree with him there were a good many fives in that district to-day (applause).

Short reports were then given by representatives of the different districts.

MISSION REPORTS.

The Rev. D. AGATE reported on the work of the Manchester District Association, and began with a reference to the East Cheshire Union, which is engaged in pioneer work at Boston Mills and Ashton; and to the North-East Lancashire Mission, which has just opened a new church at Horwich, and is building one at Leigh. His own Association covered an area of over 100 square miles, with a population of nearly a million and a half. Four years ago they had twenty-one congregations in all, or one in every 74,000; now with twenty-four congregations, and allowing for increase of population, they had one to every 64,000. He estimated there were about 4000 members in these churches, or one in 400 of the population. The Sunday-school proportion is considerably higher. Forty years ago their work took a fresh start, and in thirty years they founded five congregations and built four churches. One of the congregations, with an iron church, failed. Five new congregations had been established in the last ten years. The nine congregations thus added in forty years had, he estimated, about 1000 members, 1100 scholars and 120 teachers. That might not be a brilliant record, but it stood for a great deal of devoted and faithful toil. In conclusion he mentioned the great Bazaar to be held in Manchester in November to provide means for erecting four new churches.

The Rev. T. B. BROADRICK said the Western Union district ranged from Cardiff on the West to Swindon on the East, from Cheltenham on the North to beyond Penzance on the South-West. There were twenty-eight churches, several reading 'circles,' twenty-six ministers, and fifteen lay preachers, including two ladies. The life of the district was generally sluggish, through changes in business and social affairs. The widely-separated congregations had in some cases been ill-attended to, and questionable persons had sought their pulpits. Things are greatly altered for the better; accounts are presented; and though the work is chiefly one of maintaining old congregations and not planting new ones, it was being zealously and usefully done. A hopeful feature was the recent establishment of a monthly magazine for the district; and a special word of thanks was due to the Central Postal Mission for help in many ways.

Miss HARRIET JOHNSON (Liverpool) gave an account of the Postal Mission work, now nine or ten years old in this country. In the first three years 5000 people applied for literature, and the average rate since is over 2000 each year. Some 17,000 persons have thus been written to, and out of last year's correspondents over a thousand were old ones. Last year's applications came from 774 places, the Liverpool branch alone having letters ranging from the Shetland Isles to Cape Town, from Canada to India. Despite the cost of postages and literature, the cost of the movement, thanks to voluntary workers, would not exceed £200 a year. The books lent and tracts, etc., given were continually being handed on from one to another, so that the area affected became very large indeed. Some of the readers were gradually gathering into circles for conference and worship. The mission could be best described as a 'net-work of religion spread

out beneath the surface of society, and influencing high and low, rich and poor, pulpit and pew,' after the manner of Wiclif's 'postils,' and preparing the way for the new Reformation that is to be. She asked for more books of a simple affirmative kind, and recommended more active use by the churches of this means of doing good.

The Rev. T. E. M. EDWARDS reported that the London Provincial Assembly were building up a new congregation at Woolwich; at Kilburn a very flourishing church was growing up; at Tunbridge Wells services started in 1893 were being held with much success; at Ramsgate efforts were being made under a settled minister. At Eastbourne, Southend, and Walthamstow also efforts have been made, but their future remains undefined as yet. At Lewisham a very promising congregation is being formed. Forward Movement Lectures have been given in a number of districts, and much literature has been diffused. On every side were signs of quickened life and substantial growth. He urged concentrating mission work upon populous places, especially in the suburbs.

The Rev. Dr. GRIFFITHS reported on the work in Wales. He said there were eight Welsh counties without a single Unitarian church. Pioneer lecturing had gone on to remedy this state of things and three new congregations had been organised at Pontypridd and the Rhondda Valley. He deprecated unsettling the minds of people unless some place of worship and religious life could be provided for them; and he hoped help would be given to those in poorer districts who sought to build suitable meeting places. Why should they not have a Building Fund to lend sums to such congregations?

The Rev. JOHN HARRISON (Midland Christian Union) sent his report, he being prevented attending by ill-health, and the Rev. E. W. Lummis read it for him. Among the special lectures recently delivered in the district those at Stratford-on-Avon were notable in connection with the recent exclusion of a Unitarian teacher by the School Board. The lectures had proved attractive, and would probably lead to further efforts in the town. A new congregation was growing up at Small Heath, and a building to cost £3000 (with site) is in contemplation. Last February 'The Midland Lay Preacher's Association' was formed, and good work is expected from it. It has seventeen members. Success had been met in the work of reviving Alcester, but at Wolverhampton they were just holding their own, and the problem of its future called for careful thought. The Rev. J. C. Street had recently visited the aided congregations by request of the Committee with beneficial results.

Mr. J. S. MATHERS (Leeds) said the Yorkshire Union aided eight missions and churches to the extent of £300 a year. The question of adding to their number was a serious one in face of the growing breadth of doctrine in 'orthodox' nonconformity. They must remember also that a great deal of public philanthropy was carried on by their members, and it all took time. A series of lectures had been given at Sheffield, Bradford and Leeds, by the Revs. R. A. Armstrong, Dr. Klein, and L. P. Jacks, and they had interested a good many people. Some 20 lay preachers were at work in the district; out-door services are in contemplation for the summer, and arrangements are being made for mission work in a thickly-populated district of Leeds.

Mr. J. R. BEARD said one thing had occurred to him while Miss Johnson was reading her paper. They had need, he thought, of some method by which they could bring help to, and get strength from, those scattered readers and sympathisers that the Postal Mission found out in all parts of the country. They might, he thought, have a travelling representative, lady or gentleman, who would go round among these people who were willing to receive them and hold services occasionally where two or three could be got together. Mr. Mathers had told them that there was a great deal of work to be done in the East Riding, but they wanted money. His own experience was that if they did the work they got the money.

Mr. A. WORTHINGTON expressed the hope that the Forward Movement would not be allowed to result in the establishment of a number of small congregations which would

not be able to become independent. They might avoid that by not beginning to build until they had such a congregation as would ensure the success of the Movement. He suggested that they should build in sections, enlarging as necessity arose, until finally they had a place which would be complete and independent.

The Rev. W. J. DAVIS (Belfast) said he had three suggestions he should like to make. He understood that the Federation of Nonconformist Councils of England were now instituting house to house visitations in order to increase the attendance at their churches. He suggested that the Unitarians should emulate them in this matter; that every church should map out a certain district for itself; and that every house should be visited and the occupants be invited to come into the church. In the past they had not done this, but they should move with the times and do this work. His second suggestion was that their ministers should deliver, at times at any rate, extemporary sermons which had been thoroughly well prepared, and, while avoiding sensationalism, he would have them select attractive subjects. He also suggested that they should take due advantage of the press and use it more fully than they had done.

The Rev. E. W. LUMMIS (West Bromwich) said, as a convert, he had at first felt the hardness of Unitarian congregations. The expression on their faces was not encouraging (laughter). He thought participation in common mission work would help them all.

THURSDAY AFTERNOON.

The afternoon Conference was presided over by Mr. E. ELLIS, in the unavoidable absence of Mr. Jesse Hind. There was a full attendance.

The CHAIRMAN said he felt greatly honoured by being asked to preside over that great gathering, when two such important subjects as Education and Crete were down for consideration. He had taken the greatest interest in education all his life, and it was, perhaps, for that reason he had been asked to preside. They were there as representatives of various phases of thought and various churches, but it was to the honour of the churches they represented that, in the present generation, as in the past, their members had taken the greatest possible interest and part in the management of public affairs (hear, hear). Men had gone forth from their churches, not only to take their part in the world, but to assist in cleansing its by-paths and highways (hear, hear). He alluded in detail to some of the splendid work their members had done in the past, and said they should take courage from their success to go on in the same course. Of all the work in which they had taken part, the most important, in his opinion, was the promotion of education. He regarded recent legislation on this matter as of a most unsatisfactory character, and it was for them to take care that it was not of a final character, and to upset it as soon as possible (applause).

Mr. GROSVENOR TALBOT (Leeds) moved the following resolution:—

That no immediate legislation as to the Education Question will be satisfactory to the members of this Conference unless it provides (1) that the superintendence of elementary education be everywhere placed under local elected authorities, who shall have control in all schools receiving grants of public money from any

source; (2) that in the distribution of public money voted by Parliament for elementary education no preferential treatment be given to the denominational as compared with the Board schools; (3) that training colleges supported by public money shall be freely open to students of all denominations, and that in the opinion of this Conference no settlement of the Education Question can be regarded as satisfactory and final which does not provide that only secular education shall be directly or indirectly paid for out of public funds.

He said they did not support this question from a political point of view, but simply as a free conference, desiring justice to all, and a free education for every boy and girl in this country (hear, hear). He thought he could fairly claim that that was the proper place for them to discuss this question, for he remembered the part their forefathers, both spiritual and temporal, took in many of the leading questions of the day;—how they struggled for years for the abolition of the Church rates; how they were constantly on the side of the Jews in endeavouring to get rid of their disabilities, and how the Catholics were always supported by them (applause). He reminded them, however, that it was useless to speak and vote on the question before them unless they were prepared to work. They ought to work to gain their object for educational purposes; they ought to study facts and figures, and in all their efforts they should struggle that the right party should be dominant on their school boards (applause). The first paragraph of the resolution before them went down to the root of the whole matter. They wanted to have education in this country under elected boards. They knew there were 8000 parishes in England where the Church school was the only one to which children could be sent; and about 2000 more parishes where there did not exist a Board-school, but where children must be sent to some denominational school. They knew that education in those schools was not as good as the education given in the Board-schools. In their Board-schools there were 15,700 head and assistant certified teachers, and only 7800 such teachers in the denominational schools, although they largely outnumbered the Board-schools. He could not ask them to support the division of England into parishes, because that would be an unworkable proposal; but the country could be divided into large sections, where they might have, not only elected bodies for elementary education purposes, but eventually technical education and secondary education (hear, hear). He believed that the question of expense was being grossly and wilfully exaggerated by the party to whom they were opposed. Schools could be erected at an average cost of £10 per head for the 2,445,000 children now in attendance at their denominational schools. That would involve a capital charge of twenty-four million pounds, which, at $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., would be an annual charge of £600,000, and add to that a sinking fund of 1 per cent., they had a total charge of £840,000 per annum; therefore, he did not think they need look upon this question as one of money, but as one of deficient education, and he did not think England was so poor a country that it could not meet such a demand without any difficulty (applause). England could pay some forty millions a-year for her army and navy, and 140 millions on her drink bill, and sufficient on tobacco to educate every child in the whole kingdom (laughter and applause). He traced the progress of education from a legis-

lative point of view since 1870, and commenting on the last Act, he said it meant that not less than £922,000 would go under it to the voluntary schools. Was it likely that the subscriptions to the voluntary schools would be maintained under these circumstances? He thought not, and that the schools would become voluntary only in name. Why should not the advocates of Board schools have the same amount of money per head handed over to them as was to be handed over to the Church and Catholic schools? In his opinion, they were entitled to it. He regarded the new School Bill as a re-imposition of Church rates (applause), and contended that the voluntary schools were being kept up absolutely and only in the interests of the sects to which they were attached, and they wanted it done at the public expense. The ratepayers in many of the poor Board school districts required as much relief as the subscribers to the voluntary schools (hear, hear). Coming to the question of the training colleges, he said the present system was most injurious to the whole of the teaching profession. The children of to-day were no cleverer than were the children of fifty years ago; but teachers were more thoroughly trained, and the power of learning had increased so rapidly since 1870 that it was unjust that any body of men or women should be kept out of that training by which a livelihood was made. Students entered the College for two years, paying fees varying from £10 to £25, and the College received for every male student £100, and female £70, on receiving their parchment. There were forty-three residential training colleges, with accommodation for 3510 pupils. Of these, 2750 were denominational pupils, and 760 were in undenominational colleges, but many of them were church students. At thirty-five of the colleges tests were imposed, and only eight were free (cries of "shame"). Not only was this large amount given annually for training colleges, but, in the case of the Church of England, a very large sum was given for building purposes. Considering that all this money was paid by the State, he regarded it as the greatest possible injustice that one half of the population should be kept out of the teaching profession by religious tests (hear, hear). An attempt was being made to meet the want by the establishment of day training colleges, but it was only possible to establish them in large centres, and where there was a University to back them up. He hoped, as the result of their agitation, that finally all secular education would be paid for by the State (applause); and he hoped some means would be discovered by which all their religious denominations could assist in providing religious training for their children. The question of national education ought to be treated as one of urgent necessity, and every man and woman present ought to feel that an injustice done to children, parents, or teachers, was done to themselves, and by their actions should show that they were heartily in favour of justice to everybody (applause).

The Rev. C. J. STREET, M.A., LL.B., seconded the motion, saying he stood there not as a politician, but as a minister of religion. He believed very strongly that this was not so much a political as a religious question. Political it must be to some extent, so far as it was under the control of Parliament which was governed by party, but not political as

identifying them and their own will with any political party on this great question of education. If it should happen that any great party identified itself with reactionary and cruelly unjust proposals, so much the worse for that party (applause). He proceeded to speak of the gravity of the education question, remarking that it was a matter of national concern, which did or ought to interest all alike. It was not one for the sport of political parties, but one in dealing with which they should rise above political and sectarian jealousies. As to religious education, they spoke more especially as Nonconformists and Free Churchmen, and in dealing with which all sects were glad of their co-operation and assistance. They shared the grievances of their evangelical friends, and he proceeded to call attention to returns made to the executive of the special Education Committee appointed by the Liverpool Conference of last year relating to the attendance of Wesleyan Methodist children at Church of England day schools in all parts of the country. From these it appeared that there are 6758 Wesleyan Methodist churches, from which no fewer than 240,855 Wesleyan Methodist children were being systematically taught by a staff of teachers on which no Methodist could obtain an appointment without renouncing his religious beliefs. They stood in the same category, and they had to endure a still greater grievance. Not merely an ecclesiastical one, though that was bad enough, but a theological one, reaching down to the very roots of their religious life. Their children were taught, not only in denominational schools, but also in Board schools, principles which they utterly and entirely disbelieved (applause), principles which were as distasteful to him and probably to those present as were the tenets of the Church of England. As a matter of fact, he would rather send his child to a Church of England day school than to a Board school (cries of 'No'). Let him give his reason (hear, hear, and laughter). Teachers in a Church of England day school were probably in sympathy with what they taught; but so far as School Board schools were concerned, they had no guarantee that the teacher taught what he believed. He regarded the conscience clause as utterly and necessarily inoperative. He thought the difficulty might be met by putting religious teaching outside of school hours. At present they were under the unjust tyranny of a powerful sect, and this injustice was marked anew in the inequitable treatment which was being meted out to the Board schools as compared to the denominational schools in the two Bills before Parliament (applause). The one was receiving £615,000, and the other a miserable £110,000. And this was what they called statutory equality! (laughter). The State was now paying by far a greater proportion of the cost than anybody else was paying in the voluntary schools, and they would very soon have to pay the whole cost. When that came to pass, the State would demand that the schools should be treated as State schools. Then there would be a universal system of State education wholly paid for from the State funds and controlled by the people (applause). In conclusion, he urged that there should be no more compromises, but let them take their stand where they ought to have stood from the first, and have no more State establishment of religion (applause).

Mr. HENRY GREG said he believed the Church was responsible for much of the de-

fective education of the country. He quoted from approved School Board regulations to show that 'undenominational' religion does not exist for Unitarians.

Professor CARPENTER, while accepting the whole of the first part of the resolution, took exception to the last clause, because it seemed to him to involve a complete divorce between the whole teaching profession and the religious instruction of the children in their schools (cries of 'No,' and hear, hear). He submitted that in discussing the question they should endeavour to carry the great teaching profession along with them. Further, he did not believe that the nation, as a whole, deemed that religious instruction should be excluded from the programme of national education, and the only solution he saw to the difficulty was that they should commit the religious instruction of the children to the teachers, with absolute freedom to teach what they themselves believed (hear, hear).

The Rev. G. BOROS instanced Hungary as a country in which the State had successfully dealt with the education of the people.

Mr. JOHN DENDY supported the entire resolution, saying he regarded it as the logical outcome of the principle upon which their Free Churches were founded, the principle of civil and religious liberty (applause).

The Rev. C. PEACH said, in order to test the feeling of the Conference, he would move 'That all words after "denominations" in the third clause be omitted.' He asked the Conference to agree with him alike on practical grounds and on grounds of principle. If they passed the resolution, some of them on returning home would at once discredit it by their action, and he did not wish to do anything that would separate them from their orthodox neighbours. The passing of the resolution would seem to imply that they wished to give a godless education, a cry that would be raised against them in times of elections (hear, hear).

Miss JOHNSON seconded the resolution.

The Rev. J. WOOD said Birmingham School Board adopted, and had for twenty-two years stood by, a secular platform. The teachers, of whom they employed 1500, had taught truthfulness, honesty, and so forth, but not one had ever asked permission to teach their own religious convictions (applause).

The amendment was put and lost by a very large majority, and the resolution was carried with applause.

THE CRETAN QUESTION.

The Conference then proceeded to consider the Cretan question. It was introduced by the Rev. P. H. WICKSTEAD, M.A., who moved the following resolution:—

That, in view of the tyranny and persecution to which subject peoples of alien faith are continually exposed under Turkish rule, this Conference of Churches, pledged by long and honourable tradition to the cause of civil and religious liberty all the world over, expresses its sympathy with the Cretan people in their determination to throw off the Ottoman yoke, and protests against the enforcement of any solution of the Cretan question which does not leave the determination of the destinies of the island in the hands of its own people.

He said: My duty is neither to convince your reason nor to stir your enthusiasm; but simply to express, as best I may, the passion that is in your hearts. To this task I should feel myself helplessly unequal, were I not able to fall back upon the utterance of Wordsworth—to whom many of us must

have cried in these awful days, 'Wordsworth! thou should'st be with us at this hour, England hath need of thee'—and to find in his words, as I pass from point to point, the expression that we need. The resolution refers to the tyranny and persecution that ever go with the Turkish rule. But I do not wish to speak ill of the Turk. So far as I have observed, those who know the Turk best almost invariably declare him to be exceptionally cleanly, exceptionally honest, exceptionally temperate, and we all know him to be amongst the bravest of the brave. Such a character ought to be a part of the strength and the pride of humanity. But in almost every race there are reserves of lust and cruelty which may be developed and nursed into hideous and explosive violence. In the Turk these terrible reserves have been systematically fed and drawn upon as a part of the machinery by which the subject races are dealt with by their rulers; and, therefore, just in proportion to the length of our political memories, we can recall one, two, three or more occasions on which life itself has become a horror for days or weeks or months, at the bare thought that such things as the Turkish rulers have wrought upon their subjects can be, have been, or are. In the case of this last series of Armenian massacres—are we to think of it as still in progress?—the sense of our own ever closer responsibility, and our failure to meet it, has made the thought yet more terrible. Justice seems to be no more. Faith sickens. And darkness is shed over the nations from the heavy folds of that Turkish flag, the drippings from which threaten to quench the light of hope of the Kingdom of God on earth.

So did she daunt the earth and God defy!
And wheresoe'er she spread her sovereignty
Pollution tainted all that was most pure.
Have we not known—and live we not to tell—
That Justice seemed to hear her final knell?
Faith buried deeper in her own deep breast
Her stores, and sighed to find them insecure!
And Hope was maddened by the drops that fell
From shades, her chosen place of shortlived rest.
Shame followed shame, and woe supplanted
woe—

Is this the only change that time can show?
How long shall vengeance sleep? ye patient
Heavens, how long?
Infirm ejaculation! from the tongue
Of nations wanting virtue to be strong
Up to the measure of accorded might,
And daring not to feel the majesty of right!

We could do nothing? Nay! we
'wanted virtue,' we 'dared not.' But one
Mediterranean island, about the size of a
medium English county, had 'virtue to be
strong Up to the measure of accorded might.'
And that island, though girt with 'A host
as huge and strong as e'er defied Their God
and put their trust in human pride,' is still
unsubdued. If we ask how this may be,
Wordsworth again gives the answer:—

The power of Armies is a visible thing,
Formal, and circumscribed in time and space;
But who the limits of that power shall trace
Which a brave People into light can bring
Or hide, at will,—for freedom combating
By just revenge inflamed? No foot may chase,
No eye can follow, to a fatal place
That power, that spirit, whether on the wing
Like the strong wind, or sleeping like the wind
Within its awful caves.—From year to year
Springs this indigenous produce far and near;
No craft this subtle element can bind,
Rising like water from the soil, to find
In every nook a lip that it may cheer.

So Crete, in defiance of the Turkish
Empire, and with the Impotencies hovering
helplessly or threateningly around her, main-
tained the desperate fight. At last Greece
rushed in where the Powers feared to tread,

and took decisive action. Do I assign to the Powers the angels' part, and stigmatise Greece as a fool? Well! there are different kinds of angels. There are, for instance, the angels that, according to Milton, invented gunpowder, and that, according to an even more august authority, 'believe and tremble' when they hear mention of the holy names that they affect to despise or to defy. And there are sundry kinds of folly, amongst others there is that foolishness of God which is wiser than man, and that goes united with a weakness of God that is stronger than man—as the world is already seeing. Soon may it be so revealed that all flesh shall see it together! Meanwhile, the names of King George of Greece and his heroic sons seem to give us air to breathe, and relieve our hearts from the shame that is cast upon the human race when we speak of the Sultan of Turkey, of the despots of Eastern Europe who support him, and of the 'mighty nations' that have stooped to be their underlings!

The Voice of song from distant lands shall call
To that great King, shall hail the crowned Youth
Who, taking counsel of unbending Truth,
By one example hath set forth to all
How they with dignity may stand, or fall,
If fall they must. Now, whither doth it tend?
And what to him and his shall be the end?
That thought is one which neither can appal
Nor cheer him; for the illustrious [Dane] hath
done
The thing which ought to be, is raised above
All consequences: work he hath begun
Of fortitude, and piety, and love,
Which all his glorious ancestors approve:
The heroes bless him, him, their rightful son.

And what has been our part? Many of us
ministers are wont to lead our congregations
in the prayer that our country may be 'the
stronghold of right, the refuge of the
oppressed, the moderator of lawless ambi-
tion,' that she may be 'just in the exercise
of power, generous in the protection of
weakness.' Is this the message that has been
belched forth from our ironclads in the
hideous eloquence of the great guns? A
refuge of the oppressed—generous in the
protection of weakness? If even now at the
eleventh, or past the eleventh, hour, we shape
our policy by this aspiration, then, should it
lead to isolation, it will be a splendid isola-
tion—aye, and should it lead to war, it will be
a glorious war. In that day of isolation or
of war—

We shall exult, if they who rule the land
Be men who hold its many blessings dear;
Wise, upright, valiant, not a servile band,
Who are to judge of danger which they fear,
And honour which they do not understand.

Mr. Chairman, I stand here as one 'who
speaks, but holds back words more burning
than he utters.' Yet would I not end on
the note of apprehension or rebuke, but
rather in the confidence of that hope which
is now a 'paramount duty,' and of that con-
fidence which true men even now must feel.
Greece and Crete will win the day!

Nor discipline nor valour can withstand
The shock, nor quell the inevitable rout
When in some great extremity breaks out
A people on their own beloved land,
Risen like one man to combat in the sight
Of a just God, for liberty and right.

Mr. E. CLEPHAN seconded the motion.

Rev. L. P. JACKS (Birmingham), in sup-
porting the motion, said that a nation that
was afraid to do right for fear of war had
become a moral nonentity amongst the
nations of the world (applause).

Mr. J. C. WARREN (Nottingham) objected
to the motion being brought on without due
notice, and moved the following amend-
ment:—

That this Conference of churches pledged by long and honourable tradition to the cause of religious liberty expresses a hope that the Government of this country, in conjunction with the other great Powers of Europe, may succeed in bringing about a solution of the Cretan question which, while preserving the peace of Europe, may preserve for the inhabitants of Crete, whether Christians or Mahomedans, the right to exercise their religious worship without interference or persecution, either from the governing authority or from one another.

The amendment was seconded by Dr. GREAVES (Canterbury); but, on being submitted, only a few voted for it.

The resolution was carried with enthusiasm; and on the motion of Mr. E. S. HARDING, seconded by the Rev. P. DEAN, copies were ordered to be sent to Lord Salisbury and Sir W. Harcourt.

The Conference then adjourned.

A public meeting was held in Albert Hall in the evening, when addresses were given by Rev. Dr. Herford, S. F. Williams, G. St. Clair, W. Binns, and W. Blake Odgers, Q.C. There was a crowded attendance. A report of the addresses is given in the regular issue of 'THE INQUIRER,' April 17, 1897.

FRIDAY MORNING.

THE Devotional Meeting, on Friday, was conducted by the Rev. R. J. JONES, M.A., Mr. W. J. PHILLIPS, and the Rev. J. B. LLOYD. Following the service, the following paper was read:—

THE PLACE OF IMMORTALITY IN RELIGIOUS BELIEF.

BY PROFESSOR J. ESTLIN CARPENTER.

QUOTING Emerson's saying that, all serious souls are better believers in immortality than they could give good grounds for, the speaker said that he must pass by many aspects of the question, such as the testimony of the race, and he should take for granted the distinction between the principles involved in the religion of Jesus, and the modes of expression belonging to his nation and age. He would ask what hopes might be based on the nature and experience of man, and on the character and purposes of God.

It is now admitted by the most competent psychologists that cerebral investigation puts no veto on the conception of our being after death. It is no longer affirmed that the brain secretes thought as the liver secretes bile. Under no conceivable circumstances could we learn the nature of spirit by any scrutiny of the processes of the flesh. Neither physics nor physiology said yea or nay. The doctrine of evolution, however, had in recent years received a suggestive interpretation when it was pointed out that in some remote period of man's history its operation had been diverted from man's physical frame to his mind. It worked for a higher kind of individuality than any of its preceding stages had realised; the centre of interest had been transferred from the outward organism to the inner forces of which it is the vehicle. On this basis some biologists who confidently assumed the prophet's mantle, predicted that mankind would move upwards even on earth to heights of which now we only dimly dream. But there was another side to this expectation; behind the glory of this age of peace lay the faint vision of a dying sun. Only faith could pluck out the heart of the mystery, and declare that souls are more precious than any number of spinning planets, and could outlast them all. Give her the deathless life, and she is content to endure loss and decay, for that which has spiritual meaning would abide. But if not, love would still be better than selfishness, and truth than falsehood, purity than lust, and whoever yielded to the pessimist, and pronounced the world-process valueless if there were no immortality, committed treason against the only realities we know, threw all the achievements of the past into confusion, and trampled the accumulations of experience into the dust.

But man's destiny is not only to be inferred from his historical development, it is also

implied in what he is now. Here the question of personality entered. It was one of the paradoxes of our being that mind, which was the source and instrument of all our knowledge, should be, in a certain sense, itself unknown. Let those who liked reduce themselves to a mere sum or series of states of consciousness, the attempt would not satisfy those who had wrestled with passion, or subdued the rebellious self-will. Through effort are we born into fuller realisation of our being; there do we know ourselves as causes, and learn that in the ultimate crisis of our life we are left to determine ourselves for good or ill. But the nature of this power was still unknown to us; we could not present it to ourselves in imagination; how it could be in space at all it was impossible for us to conceive. There was a wide range of mysterious facts which suggested that an experimental knowledge might not always be beyond our reach; and though the study of them might be beset with difficulty, it could not be denied that the enquiry was legitimate. Why should not the sphere of spirit be as full of X-rays as the realm of light?

Again, it had been often observed that the spiritual nature of man seemed to contain within it elements enormously in excess of his evolutionary requirements; they seemed intelligible only in relation to a life conceived upon a larger scale than the place and time limits of our earthly years. The discovery of the immensity of the universe, so far from really dwarfing the importance of man, only revealed in him an understanding that matched the vastness around him, and created a fellowship between the spirit of man and the spirit of nature. This did not grow weaker with the aging frame; and pointed to capacities in man for whose training the first steps were taken here, to be continued with enlarging opportunity in the great beyond. The same hope rose from every department of the ideal life. The sense of beauty, the authority of conscience, the exquisite delights and high self-denials of affection, all carried in them a certain connection with the boundless, and dimly through them we laid hold of the conception of perfect being. And if behind the changing shows of time there lay the changeless ground of all our life, the whole question of immortality conceived as continuous duration might take another form, and pass out of the sphere of quantity into that of quality, denoting rather a measure of participation in a divine life than an indefinite extension of the human. The history of religion pointed again and again to an order of experience implying a power of intuition capable of combining into a unity of thought details which must otherwise be apprehended successively. Illustrations of a lower sort might be drawn from mathematics or music. When this was applied to religion, as in the Fourth Gospel, æonian life was defined as knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ whom He had sent, it was plain that we had not to do with a time process. What was apprehended in worship was not capable of measurement by the clock. The vision of God was not spread over days and years. There was a sphere where insight had nothing to do with the lapse of hours. Be time a fact or an illusion, the eternal in truth and beauty, in goodness and in love, was the soul's true goal.

But religion could never rest its case only on the nature of man; it must enter the sanctuary and ask what consecration it received in the presence of God. The disciple of Jesus felt that in looking to God as the Father of his spirit lay the guarantee of all his hope; in saying 'Be ye perfect' Jesus postulated immortality. From another point of view it might be affirmed that in calling us into existence God had made us subject to his justice and encompassed us with his love. What expectation did these two great principles suggest. First of all, a future was sometimes demanded (1) on the ground of unfulfilled claims of the moral law, and (2) that suffering innocence might receive appropriate compensation. That the moral order was not completely worked out in this life seemed to be a deep-seated conviction in the heart of the race. In the reaction against ancient forms of this belief, there was a danger of forgetting the realities which they were designed to express, and there was unquestionably place for a doctrine of retribution. The awakened heart would desire the suffering which would make it pure. But there were spiritual conditions in which this argument might be inverted. What of the children of depravity whom our self-complacency called outcast? What did the embittered man, the degraded woman, in whose flesh there burned unholy fires kindled by

generations of indulgence,—what did these *deserve*? In departing virtue we were sometimes invited to behold the serene promise of futurity: What of departing vice? Could we reject their half-articulate cry for deliverance from a bondage not of their own making? Was justice satisfied if they were condemned; did it not rather plead not so much for judgment on the guilty as for help for the lost? And would the resources of God's grace be impotent to seek and save?

The inequalities of moral condition presented a far graver problem than the varieties in the distribution of happiness, though another life had often been invoked to redress the balance of this. But there was always an uncertainty in the external calculus of pleasure and pain, for the lot that looked pitiable from the outside might be transfigured by graces of self-surrender from within. And this plea must remain inadequate as an argument for immortality. There could be no more justice in rewarding the privations of three score years and ten with an eternity of bliss than in punishing the transgressions of the same period with torment that lasts for ever. The thought that God shared in the suffering of the world through knowledge and sympathy did not relieve all the difficulty; but it lifted the whole process on to another plane. The alternative 'either man is immortal, or God is not just' made the character of God depend on the discovery of the future, not the experience of the present. Justice for the whole world was on a vaster scale than we could measure; only God could understand God: where we could not comprehend we could still adore; for of him and through him and to him are all things.

One scene in history concentrated these contrasts: Jesus was crucified between two thieves. What destinies awaited them, and why? The robbers belonged to the criminal classes. They might have been begotten in infamy, their life had been a warfare. Yet was there not something God meant them to be, and if there was a divine idea representing each soul which God created, must it not ever tend towards fulfilment? From this point of view the doctrine of conditional immortality was only one degree less terrible than the conception of an everlasting hell. For both implied that the intention of God might be perpetually frustrated. In the one case, weary of opposition, he shattered resistance by simple annihilation, in the other he dismissed the rebellious beyond the limits of his grace, as if he said, 'You have asserted your independence, you shall have it; you have defied me, you shall be fixed in your defiance!' Each of these dooms implied a soul cut off from God, but that also implied that God was cut off from the soul. But the redeeming purpose expressed in the life of Jesus could not be satisfied with the elimination of the unmanageable. The spiritual education of humanity as sons of God must one day be complete for all. And on the other hand, would they ask Jesus what compensation he required for anguish in Gethsemane? Was it not better to pay the utmost price for the awful honour of bearing witness to the truth than to turn back at the last moment because neither the victory of the cause nor the person of the champion was secure? But there was another side to this great surrender. The logic of our affections suggested that God would not contemplate with indifference the departure of his beloved. In man there was a unique expression of the infinite life: could we conceive God as severing the ties he had himself established, was it not true that 'whomsoever God loveth, liveth with God.'

On this great theme, however, argument could be but of slight avail. Our belief in immortality was matter, not of knowledge, but of faith and hope. But that faith justified itself by the coherence which it introduced amid the discrepant elements incapable of earthly reconciliation, and the strength which it gave to every energy of good. The high desire of knowledge, the creative power of imagination, the longing for the liberation of man from ignorance and error, the yearning for a share in his redemption from sin, the joy in wonder, reverence, humility, as far off visions of God's thought and love, his beauty and righteousness, dawned clearer on the sight,—who could be weary of these things? Who would not pray that the mysterious teacher whom we called Death might whisper to us, like him of old, 'I am come that ye may have life, and may have it abundantly.'

UNITARIAN WORKERS' UNION.

At noon, a Conference of the Unitarian Workers' Union was held, Mrs. MANNING,

of Sheffield, taking the chair. There was a large attendance, amongst those on the platform being Lady Bowring, of Exeter.

Letters of apology were read from Miss Frances Cooke, Miss Davenport Hill, and other ladies.

Mrs. MANNING, in her opening address, said that they knew, in the early Christian Church, honourable women laboured, and not a few honourable women were working in their Unitarian Churches throughout the country at the present day. It was in a spirit of mutually helping in carrying out social work amongst their congregations, and in the country, that they were meeting that day. The Union, under whose auspices they were meeting, had really sprung from the Central Postal Mission. Last year the Committee of this Mission, feeling that its methods of work might usefully be extended to other work, established this Union of Unitarian workers for the purpose of gathering together those who were engaged in all kinds of social, benevolent, and educational work throughout their churches. They desired that all carrying out this work should affiliate with the Central Society. They were left absolutely free, as far as their internal work went, but were expected to send every year a report to the Central Mission, and also had the privilege of sending a delegate to the annual meeting. They also hoped that, not only societies, but isolated workers, and especially women workers, would join their Society. They thought, in this way, Unitarian women workers on School Boards and Guardians, etc., all through the country, would gain strength for their own work, and also the experience obtained by the Central, as to the best methods of doing social work, would be distributed to its various societies and members. The Society had not yet been established a year, so that they had not a record of work done to give, but it had a promise and potentiality of good work in the future. They, as Unitarians, did not seem yet to have grasped the value of combination, co-operation, and organisation. Large as had been the influence of their Church on the social life of the nation, she thought it would have been incomparably larger in the past, and incomparably larger in the future, if they could hang more closely together, and not want to carry on their social work on a narrow or sectarian basis. She did not think the best work was done on this basis, and she thought that work done on this basis never lasted. A good deal more might be done by forging a large chain to link their social life and Church life together. If this were done, would not their Church life gain immensely in width, depth, and earnestness of purpose, as it touched everywhere the needs of suffering humanity all around it. And would not their social life gain by a strong religious feeling being carried into their work. If they felt they had strong religious purpose at the back of their social work, they would feel that their work was not in vain in the Lord, and that they could do everything through Him that strengthened them (applause).

Miss DOWSING gave an account of the Birmingham (Church of the Messiah) Women's Friendly Society.

Miss PRITCHARD, of London, addressed the Union on 'Women's Work, Religious and Social.' First, however, she said she wished to utter a few words of protest to the managers of the Conference, on

their methods of arranging the meetings. All the meetings of the Conference, with the exception of one the previous day, had been confined to one half of their workers, and that afternoon the other half were meeting. Did they not think it would have been better if they had all worked together? (loud applause). The subject she wished to bring before them that day was the great necessity for training. They were all aware that no man could do any good work unless he were trained; but, somehow, they had an idea that women could jump to any work without it. That was a great mistake. There were many ways in which this training might be had, but she wished to speak of one; she meant the training in the Sunday-school. How grudgingly, often, parents allowed their children to take a class at the Sunday-schools, and yet it was one of the grandest training grounds which existed. Sunday-schools did scholars an immense amount of good, but to the teacher it was a wonderful training. She hoped they would remember that, without training, their boys and girls could do nothing; and it was not a week's, or a month's, training, but years of patient training, which would assist the young man or woman to do good work in the cause of humanity.

Miss LUCAS, a member of the Darlington School Board, spoke on the subject of 'Adult Schools.' A favourite subject at conferences, she said, was 'How to attract the working man to religious services,' and how to make the agencies already existing more effective. She was anxious to bring before their notice the splendid work done by the Society of Friends in connection with their adult schools. In many towns this had been a most successful and useful work, the membership now being estimated at 28,000. Having described in detail the methods of work at these schools, Miss Lucas said she thought one great secret of the success of this movement was the socialistic element which pervaded it. All met together on the same footing, teachers and scholars having equal responsibility in the work.

Miss JOHNSON, of Liverpool, briefly addressed the conference on the subject of 'Temperance,' and described the good work which they had done in Liverpool in that direction.

Miss JAMES, secretary of the National Association of Women Workers, was warmly received, and, in an interesting address, described the grand scope for women's work in the social life of the present day. She was glad to see the eagerness with which an opportunity in this work was seized upon by people of such divergent modes of thinking. There never was a time when the scope for women's work was nobler, higher, better, than at the present day; and they had to take up their life with all its difficulties and try to bear them nobly and well, try to help wherever they might be, and to believe that in doing the thing which lay nearest to their hand, the way might be opened to them for higher service. She earnestly rejoiced in the new life which was springing up amongst them in connection with the work of the women of their congregations.

Miss TAGART, of the Central Postal Mission, spoke briefly of the increasing need for women to take part in the great social work of the day.

The morning proceedings were brought to a close with a hearty vote of thanks to Mrs. Manning for her address and for presiding.

FRIDAY AFTERNOON.

Over the Conference in the afternoon Mr. J. R. BEARD presided.

INTERNATIONAL ARBITRATION.

BY HODGSON PRATT, ESQ.

'God hath made of one blood all the nations of the earth.'

THE idea which has probably been uppermost in the minds of those attending these Conferences is that a true comprehension of the relations of man to God, and of men to one another should be our foremost and abiding purpose in this life. In other words, we may say, I suppose, that the consciousness of the existence of God as the Father of our spirits, and as One who is, therefore, in constant communication with us, is the primary fact which concerns all human beings. That manifestation of God to our spirits has necessarily been more or less complete, in past ages, in proportion as men have been able to receive it, according to their varying degrees of mental and moral capacity.

Notwithstanding these differences, it will, I suppose, be generally admitted that there is a noteworthy resemblance among the founders of the greater Religions, with respect to their fundamental ideas. For instance, may we not say that the chief teachers of all times and races have alike taught the Unity and Fatherhood of God, and that all men are therefore brethren?

The inability to lay hold of that fundamental truth of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man in its simplicity and completeness, and to make it the basis of all human conduct, has been and is the cause of most of the evil which man has done or suffered upon this earth.

The one purpose of all who perceive the truth should then be to make it become the dominant and unceasing principle in regulating the lives of men and of nations. Every real step in the progress of mankind,—in social, political, or religious institutions, has had its origin in the more complete recognition of this fundamental truth. Indeed, all the missions to the ignorant and neglected everywhere, the charities and various forms of beneficence, the efforts made to remedy social and political wrongs, all the religious and legislative work of modern times—have surely proceeded from the conviction that men are brethren, because they are children of one Father.

These observations, so obvious and so familiar to you, would seem most elementary platitudes but for the fact that we are so far off from the realisation of this ideal. We are holding this Conference at the close of nineteen hundred years since that truth was proclaimed in Judea. We, in Europe, conceive ourselves to possess a better appreciation of the meaning of that message, and a stronger conviction of its divine origin, than the people of the rest of the world; yet what do we see as we look at Europe? Are its peoples bound together by the ties of brotherly love, as followers of the Prince of Peace?

The answer is that they spend at this present time two hundred and twelve millions sterling per annum in preparations for mutual injury and massacre, and that, from year to year, they strive to increase that expenditure. There are four millions of men actually under arms, and there are sixteen millions of trained soldiers ready for battle at a few days' notice. We have, during the last twenty-five years, witnessed an enormous increase in preparations for defence or for attack. Even our own country, enjoying great advantages from its insular position, and but indirectly associated with Continental disorders, has, in the last twelve years, increased its annual expenditure on armaments from twenty-eight to upwards of forty-four millions sterling. The great powers of Nature, bestowed for a very different purpose, are called upon, more and more, to yield new and increased facilities for the destruction of human life and of the great human works produced by so much genius and industry, as well as for the destruction of the homes of millions of honest toilers.

It is essential to keep such facts constantly before us, lest we become dulled to the percep-

tion of the evils of modern life, and lest the sense of shame which they should evoke become weakened. It seems to me to be one of the first duties of the disciples of Christ and of the servants of God to arouse men and women everywhere unceasingly to a right perception of this state of so-called civilisation. Then, in every land, the people may become aroused to perceive that it is one of their first duties to strive for the abolition of war.

I desire to call your attention to the appalling fact that, in this respect, Europe has gone backwards during the last twenty-five years, and that international distrust and animosity have greatly increased. This is strikingly manifested by the tone of the Continental press, and I say this after a constant perusal of it for the last seventeen years. That press ministers unceasingly to the spirit of international hatred, and its articles are marked by a degree of virulence and malignity, recklessness in misstatement and of imputation of evil to foreign peoples which should fill men with pain and apprehension.

These facts assuredly call for the earnest attention of all who desire, for the sake of their own nation and the world at large, security from universal anarchy, ruin, and moral decay. It is true that economists, statesmen, and those interested in trade or commerce admit the dangers of the mad rivalry in armaments and in increasing expenditure, which, sooner or later, must lead to national bankruptcy. One would suppose that this fact would lead them to take effective measures, and to arrive at some common action for a truce of armaments or a reduction of them; but there prevails a spirit of hopelessness as to any such proposals, and when they are made, here and there, the reply is, that 'at this present time such a suggestion is impracticable.'

Probably you will concur with me in thinking that there are yet higher grounds than those of financial prudence and of national economy for demanding a change in the present relations between States, and the adoption of such agreements as shall restore security and afford the promise of peace. Yet even these considerations deserve the notice of men who place the interests of morality and of religion above all others. It must not be forgotten that the enormous sums taken from the taxpayers to be employed in armed conflict render it impossible to provide adequately for those agencies and institutions which are essential to the social and moral welfare of communities. In view of the ignorance, poverty, degradation, excessive toil, overcrowding, vice, and suffering which prevail, we sorely need the means of remedy, many and well-organised agencies involving public and private expenditure. Increased agencies for the culture, the enjoyment, and the most elementary comfort of toiling millions are demanded by every consideration of humanity. So long, however, as, year by year, fresh millions are demanded for guns, ships, and fortifications, the agencies to which I allude must be starved or withheld.

What, however, I desire chiefly to urge upon your attention is the ethical and religious aspects of the present state of passive war or armed truce in Europe. We are living in a condition of international discord which is a disgrace to the age, and must re-act injuriously on the moral sense of the populations.

The fact that the several States of Europe have conflicting claims of prestige, power and territory leads those who guide public opinion and create public sentiment to preach a crusade of hatred, to arouse barbarous passions, and to foster a desire for war. In the pursuit of this end, statements are daily published which are utterly false or grossly exaggerated, while motives of the worst character are imputed to supposed antagonists. In truth, there has arisen a system of 'international libel' on the largest scale, and while this incitement goes on, the combustible material destined for the work of conflagration accumulates everywhere.

I do not desire to dwell, chiefly, or exclusively, on the horrors of actual war, its cruelty and the unspeakable sufferings of those tens of thousands of men who are compelled, without knowing why, to take part in abominable orgies of murder and incendiarism.

I desire rather to call attention to the moral obtuseness and the practical atheism of those who incite their fellows to this crusade of Hell. The existence of these sentiments of mutual hatred and contempt seem to me, from some points of view, almost worse than the actual carnage. Observe especially that the wars which we have witnessed of late years, and which threaten us in the future, are not, in the main, those which may formerly have been necessitated by struggles for national independence or for religious and political liberty. Most of the wars of this present time have had their sole object in the desire, on the part of one State as compared with another, for superior prestige and power of dominating. Also, many a modern war, occasioning unspeakable horrors during its continuance, and abiding evil in its consequences, has been brought about by causes so obscure and so preventable that, in a few years afterwards, most men are quite unable to explain how they arose. The Crimean war, the war between Prussia and Austria, the war between France and Germany in 1870-71, certainly come under this category. Yet what persistent consequences of the worst kind have followed that last war,—which need never have taken place had the peoples concerned been properly informed of the facts; or had the good offices of a friendly nation been appealed to (under the Protocol of the Treaty of Paris).

Similarly, the wars which Great Britain and other States have been waging in Africa were wars simply of aggression, and, therefore, in no wise unavoidable. They were carried on in the spirit of greed, and because the mass of the British people and its rulers have no passionate desire for justice or mercy, and have no horror of bloodshedding; and, in a word, are not influenced by the spirit of Christ in their public and international policy and proceedings.

If, then, the disregard of those higher purposes which communities should keep before them; if this reckless waste of national resources; if this callous indifference to the sanctity of human life or to the justice of the wars in which we engage,—continue, surely there will be a steady deterioration of the moral and religious sense; and it is to that point to which I desire to call the attention of those who are anxious to strengthen the influence of the churches of Christ in the world.

There is another aspect of the question which the nation cannot neglect, if it desires to maintain for itself an influence in the world for good and noble purposes. England is creating for herself great dangers by the character which she has gained for unscrupulous greed and territorial ambition. Through this universal suspicion of her motives, the British Government was not allowed to intervene on behalf of our brethren, the Armenians, more than a hundred thousand of whom have been slaughtered. Through the same cause, the grandest project the world has seen for many a day, that of an Arbitration Treaty between the United States and Great Britain, has been for a time frustrated. Through the disgraceful attempt to raid the Transvaal, which would have been applauded by large numbers in this country if it had succeeded, a feeling of dangerous alienation has been created between ourselves and our kindred of Protestant faith,—our German brethren,—to say nothing of the enhanced strife of races in South Africa.

What I wish then to urge upon your attention is the vast importance to the world that the teachers of religion should habitually and strongly insist upon ethics as applied to public questions, and insist on the doctrine of Fraternity and Justice as applied to all international relations. We cannot be Christians in our own homes, and Atheists in our dealings with other communities of men, merely because they happen to be Frenchmen, Germans or Africans.

The essential character of War, *i.e.*, of a resort to brute force for the settlement of rival claims and pretensions, is opposed to the most elementary principles of right and wrong. That practice claims for itself that every nation can be judge of its own cause, and that Force can determine on what side justice prevails. Duties towards our brethren in other lands are just as binding as duties to our own country-

men. These elementary truths, however, are not recognised in practice, and until they are, neither justice nor peace can reign in the world. Surely it is the clear and pressing duty of the churches to educate all peoples in the detestation of this practice, to arouse their consciences, to remove from their minds a dense cloud of prejudice, pride and selfishness with respect to war.

I venture to think that the Pulpit has immense possibilities of influence before it, but that it does not possess the power which it should have in human society, because the doctrines which it preaches are not adequately pressed home in respect to the details of our public and private life. As the scientific lecturer on physics at a college needs the laboratory, where he may illustrate his theories in the most tangible manner, does not the preacher also need to find his laboratory in the world around him—not only in the home but in the workshop, the counting house, in the town hall, on the hustings and in Parliament? Would men be so dead to all sense of duty in international affairs, so unconscious of the flagrant injustice and the utter heathenism of war, if preaching were somewhat more 'realistic' in its character?

The influence for good which the pulpit may exercise in reference to practical politics, in the highest sense of that word, is shown by what took place in the United States last December twelvemonth. President Cleveland had delivered a startling and alarming message to the Senate. The latter had responded in a spirit of bitter hostility towards England, and the press had followed suit. On the very next Sabbath day, however, a remarkable occurrence took place, which had still greater results. 'From east to west, from north to south,' the pulpits of America, almost without exception, declared in tones never to be forgotten that war with 'the Mother Land' would be a calamity not to be thought of, and must be put away for ever. In an instant, the spirit of hatred and of war was hushed, the heart of that great American nation responded marvellously to the appeal of its preachers, and everywhere there went up the cry of peace and goodwill. That incident will ever remain in the memory of the American people. It is a striking proof of the great and deserved influence which those living churches of our brethren across the Atlantic exercise over the mass of the people.

During my brief visit to the States, last summer, I was greatly struck by the evidence, which came to me from all sides, of the glorious vitality of the churches there. I suppose they owe it to the general vigour which distinguishes all life in that young country, and especially to the multitude of good works of which every church is the centre. May they not also owe it to something in the character of the preaching; viz., that doctrine is most strongly illustrated in its frequent reference to the actual facts of modern life, alike in the home and in public spheres of activity?

It must be admitted, however, that the problem of establishing the rule of Law in place of the rule of Force is surrounded with far greater difficulties in Europe than in America. The United States have no such 'foreign affairs' as we have in Europe. They are, practically, without rivals and antagonists at their very doors; they are free from the long heritage of warfare which afflicts us in Europe.

It is with England that the States have had the chief part of their foreign disputes; and it is in the case of these 'two nations, one people' that the noble remedy for war, Arbitration, has had its chief triumphs. Since the year 1815, there have been sixty instances of effective international arbitration, and in thirty-two of these the United States have been a party; while Great Britain has been a party to twenty of them. Immediately after the American Revolution, a Treaty was negotiated with Great Britain, through Chief Justice Jay, which provided for a 'firm, inviolable and universal peace, and a true and sincere friendship' between the two nations which has been inviolate, with one exception, for one hundred and two years.

Our kith and kin beyond the Atlantic have been the pioneers in this beneficent evolution

in human affairs, and the great question of the present time, it seems to me, is how far this principle of international justice can be universally adopted, especially in Europe. The nations of the latter are threatened with appalling danger, and the sense of that danger induces them to engage in the ruinous rivalry of armaments to which I have referred.

Now, as regards this suggested substitute for war, the Lord Chief Justice of England said, in his remarkable address to the jurists of the United States, that it 'may be fitly applied in by far the largest number of questions which lead to international differences.' There is also the great fact of the increasing resort, during late years, to this mode of judicial settlement, in proportion as growing experience has proved its efficacy. Experience of the results of resort to arbitration has also removed the apprehension that arbitral decisions would require armed force to give them effect. On the contrary, the decrees pronounced by the arbitrators have been universally accepted, even by powerful States, and in cases where they were dissatisfied with the award.

On the other hand, the growing intercourse of nations, the constant increase in the number of conflicting claims in all parts of the globe, multiply occasions for dangerous disputes.

What, then, impedes the universal adoption of a principle which is the embodiment of justice itself, which would relieve nations of the increasing danger of the slow ruin of an armed peace, or the rapid ruin of actual war, from the cruel tyranny of military conscription, and which would at once increase the security and prosperity of nations?

It has been said that the two kindred peoples whose Governments recently agreed to create a Tribunal for their future disputes, and have so often successfully adopted the system of arbitration, did so because they desired so earnestly the maintenance of peace between them. What we should desire and work for is that all nations should be brought to entertain a similar desire that their relations should be placed on a permanent basis of mutual respect and mutual amity. This, we hope will be effected by one or more permanent Tribunals, secured by treaty.

To bring about that state of feeling between all peoples should be the main object, not only of the Peace Societies, but of the Churches also, and of all who care for the well-being of mankind and the moral progress of society. The deplorable fact is that the hereditary animosities, the military spirit, the rival ambitions of rulers, their fierce competition for 'prestige,' and the desire for extended colonial territory, on the part of a large section of the Middle Classes, have created a fierce jealousy, suspicion and antipathy between even the most civilised States. It is this which will render it difficult, in many cases, to secure the conclusion of permanent treaties of arbitration, or of a permanent High Court of Nations.

But we must all labour to overcome this difficulty; and there are many modes by which a right international spirit may be promoted. It is for the religious and philanthropic societies, of which every Christian congregation should be the centre, to understand those modes of operation and educate the communities amidst which they are situated. The organised 'Peace-Makers' will only be too happy to advise and co-operate with them. These are the 'Laboratories' where the teaching of the pulpit may be applied in practice, and find new strength and enthusiasm in doing so.

The above suggestion naturally leads me to report briefly on what has been done, and is now being done, by the Arbitration and Peace Societies towards the attainment of the sacred object they have had in view. To the lasting honour of the American and British people, organised efforts on behalf of Peace were commenced so long ago as the years 1815 and 1816. From the year 1867, similar Societies began to make their appearance in Continental Europe; but, until within the last few years, they exercised but little influence, and were hardly known to the general public; and, where known, they were generally considered to aim at impossible results. With the exception of such men as Richard Cobden, John Bright, Henry Richard,

and Frédéric Passy, men of mark in the political world stood aloof from a movement which was regarded as purely sentimental.

One of those just mentioned, Henry Richard, a minister of the Gospel, a member of the House of Commons, and Secretary of the Peace Society, did obtain a considerable amount of tangible success. By personal visits to several of the capital cities of Europe, he induced several legislative bodies to do what he had effected in the British Parliament, viz., to adopt resolutions in favour of the principle of arbitration in international disputes. That fact turned public attention to the subject, educated opinion to some extent in favour of the idea, and induced Statesmen to consider whether the principle could be adopted in practice whenever differences arose between States. Another consequence was the insertion, in many commercial treaties, of what is called the 'Arbitral Clause.' That is to say, it was provided that, in the case of any disagreement arising as to the interpretation of such treaties, the points at issue should be settled by arbitration.

In the year 1867, 'The Society of the Friends of Peace' was founded in Paris, and is now known as 'The French International Arbitration Society.' Its founder was its present distinguished President, M. Frédéric Passy, a member of the Institute of France, an able economist and disciple of Cobden, and for many years a Deputy in the French Chamber.

In 1867 was also founded, at Geneva, 'The International League of Peace and Liberty,' whose President was Charles Lemonnier, a disciple of Charles Fourier, an ardent believer in the Republican form of government, a jurist, and a man deservedly admired for his high character, simplicity of life, and devotion to social and political reforms.

In 1868 was founded 'The Working Men's Peace Association,' now known as 'The International Arbitration League.' Its secretary, Mr. W. Randal Cremer, has rendered great and lasting services in originating and promoting the movement for an Anglo-American Arbitration treaty, as well as the establishment of 'The Inter-Parliamentary Union,' to which I will now briefly refer.

In 1887, Mr. W. R. Cremer, then in Parliament, induced two hundred and thirty-four of his colleagues to sign an address to the President and Congress of the United States, expressing satisfaction that a proposal had been introduced into that Congress for the adjustment by arbitration of all differences between the two countries. President Cleveland referred the House of Commons' Address to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and, in February, 1890, resolutions were unanimously adopted by Congress, authorising the President to invite negotiations for that object with all Foreign governments.

That resolution was communicated to European Governments; and, in consequence, Mr. Cremer moved a resolution in the House of Commons, on June 16th, 1893, expressing satisfaction and the hope that Her Majesty's Government would 'lend their ready co-operation to the Government of the United States upon the basis of the foregoing resolution.'

The next step taken by Mr. Cremer was to suggest to M. Frédéric Passy the formation of an 'Inter-Parliamentary Union,' or Committee of Members of all Parliaments, for the furtherance of arbitration. Through the able co-operation of our distinguished French friend, this Union (or 'Conference' as it is often called) held its first meeting in Paris in 1889, and it was resolved that it should meet annually from that time. These members of European Parliaments, about 1500 in number, have accordingly held important Conferences in London, Rome, Brussels, and other cities; and, in 1895, they adopted a scheme for a Permanent Court of Arbitration, which should be submitted for the favourable consideration of all civilised states. The Central Office, or 'Bureau,' of this Union is at Berne.

In the year 1880, the 'International Arbitration and Peace Association,' which I represent on this occasion, was formed on somewhat different lines. We were of opinion that some systematic effort should be made to deal with all the causes, direct and indirect, which lead to

war. We observed, further, that a large number of disputes frequently rise between States, of which the true facts are unknown to the public on either side. Nevertheless, one-sided or inaccurate statements regarding them are published by the newspapers, and become the text for acrimonious and violent attacks against any foreign State or People concerned in such disputes. Many of these latter are quite capable of equitable and pacific settlement; but the public on both sides is so misled that the two Governments concerned are constrained to adopt a more aggressive attitude than they would have desired.

Moreover, the Governments are, for various reasons, unwilling and unable to state the whole case impartially. In the meantime, the Press, pandering to a spirit of false patriotism and to the traditional suspicion of 'foreigners,' repeats its attacks until a very dangerous state of feeling is created; and each government is afraid of appearing to yield to the supposed enemy.

From another and higher point of view, this propaganda of international hate is to be deeply regretted. We should never lose sight of the consideration that, just as the different countries of the world have an infinite variety of natural products, so that their inhabitants may mutually benefit each other, and become mutually dependent by the exchange of those products,—so there is a corresponding diversity of mental gifts among the nations of the world. Surely it is not unreasonable to suppose that this diversity was designed to bring about a mutual exchange of ideas, of experience, and of knowledge. Through this diversity, the qualities of one people supplement those of another; the progress of mankind at large is thereby facilitated; and this mutual interdependence should link all the peoples to one another, and promote peace, unity, and co-operation. But these great purposes and designs are utterly frustrated by the constant circulation of false news and of antagonism founded thereon.

Our Association therefore conceived the idea of creating some organised system of counter-acting this great and widespread evil. We determined to endeavour to constitute a union of 'The Men of Good Will' throughout Europe which should deal with this state of things. We would try to combine in a common federation the few existing Peace Societies, and to create new groups everywhere. One special work which the federated societies would be asked to perform was that of correcting misstatements made in the Press, or platforms, or in Parliaments, and to publish careful statements of the whole of the facts, so far as it was possible to ascertain them. Our object should be described as one for the diminution or removal of international misunderstandings and misapprehensions. Thus, if a French journal published erroneous statements regarding some supposed designs and proceedings of England, we would examine documents and make inquiries, with a view to an exposition of the case, and then ask the French Society to publish the same.

In fine, we desired that practical methods should be adopted by these 'co-operating and corresponding' Societies to bring about a better mutual knowledge between the peoples, and, therefore, a better mutual regard. As Chairman of the Association, I undertook, through several successive years, to visit many of the chief cities of the Continent, with a view to explain this project, and to help in the foundation of new Societies, as members of the proposed federation.

In addition to the meetings thus held in France, Belgium, Germany, Austria, Hungary, and Italy, we organised two well-attended Congresses at Brussels and Berne respectively. Much interest was shown, and we obtained the hearty approval and co-operation of valued friends in many cities.

In Germany, considerable hesitation was shown to set on foot Societies, in consequence of her relations with France, but of late years the Peace movement in that country has developed remarkably. The Peace Societies of Europe now have a central Bureau at Berne and hold Congresses annually.

With regard to our own country, we have, on every possible opportunity, pressed the Govern-

ment to resort to arbitration in the case of disputes with foreign countries; and, as an instance, I may observe that, for the last six years, we urged a resort to that mode of settlement in the case of Venezuela. In every disagreement with Foreign Powers, we have endeavoured to form an impartial judgment, after most careful inquiry into the facts.

The results we have published in our journal *Concord*, and in the *Echo* newspaper. The editor of the latter has given me, for the last six years, about a column in the front page for a fortnightly article entitled 'International Unity.'

One of the most satisfactory results of our work has been the establishment of most cordial relations with a large number of valued friends all over Europe.

As in other countries, so in our own, the peace-makers have to contend with the erroneous presumption that one's own Government must always have right on its side. Yet, in how many cases, have subsequent events proved the contrary! Frequently, during the last fifty years, our foreign policy and consequent proceedings have proved erroneous and mischievous. Worst of all, the passion for territorial aggression and for the extension of Empire has prevailed among a large number of our countrymen, so that the most elementary rights of weaker races have been disregarded.

But for all wrong-doing there is punishment, alike for nations as for individuals, however long it may be in coming. It has already overtaken us. In every part of the world we have awakened a deep distrust. If overweening greed and reckless disregard of duty had not infected our own people, the lawless raid on the Transvaal would never have taken place. Nor would the infamous cruelty and oppression practised in Mashonaland and Matabeleland have occurred, because a sound public opinion at home would have withheld all encouragement to deeds which have stained the national honour. Already the consequences have shewn themselves in the resistance of the oppressed tribes,—overcome with frightful bloodshed.

At no period of man's history have the masses exercised so great a control over events; and, therefore, the education of public opinion assumes an importance it never had before. The great question of our time is, *who* shall form that opinion: shall it be left wholly to the guidance and control of newspapers, often corrupt (on the Continent at least), often unenlightened and reckless, seeking only to please the million readers; or shall this immense responsibility devolve upon those who speak in the name of the God of Righteousness and of His greatest representative, Jesus Christ?

The whole course of human history in the future will depend upon the extent to which the democracies shall be ruled by a supreme desire for justice; or, in other words, by the desire to manage their public, as well as their private, affairs in the light of God's law. Until that is the case—to a far larger extent than at present—the Rule of Law will not be established in place of the Rule of Force. Not until then will that great High Court of Nations be established, to which all Governments will resort as a matter of course. Not until then will permanent treaties of Arbitration become universal. Not until then will there be a due sense of shame and remorse for every act of wrong committed towards a foreign people,—whether civilised or uncivilised, whether powerful or feeble. What a noble work for the churches lies before them—if they will no longer confine themselves to the declaration of general principles, but give them new life and meaning by direct and outspoken application to the daily events of the time in which we live! When will men be universally penetrated with the truth that we 'are all members one of another,' whether we live by the banks of the Thames, the Neva, the Ganges, the Mississippi, or the Brahmapootra?

Yet how far we are from showing that we believe it, in view of the fact that Europe is an armed camp, exposed to the danger of some Satanic outburst of passion, which may sentence millions of men to death, starvation, ruin, and misery.

War has no compensating feature, inasmuch as it settles no question as to right or wrong; it

ever lays the seeds of fresh conflicts; and is the practical denial of God.

Teachers of His Word, you have surely too long neglected to educate men sufficiently to a right estimate of the moral and religious infamy of War. Let it be your care, in the future, to convince men of the flagrant sin against human Brotherhood involved in blood-shedding. Let the churches, schools, colleges, universities, Parliaments, and Press unite in training young and old alike to a perception of the truth of this matter. 'Peace, based on Justice,' must become the watchword of men in all lands, for, without it, there can be no progress towards the rule of God on the earth, no true civilisation, no true Christianity.

Peace, founded on Justice, is as necessary for the growth of all that is noble and glorious among men as the atmosphere is necessary for birth and growth in the world of Nature. Peace, however, is not so much an end in itself as a means to a still higher end,—unity and co-operation among all men in the realisation of the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth. In view of the evil which we inherit through long ages of the breach of the Moral Law, the ultimate victory will not be reached without many a struggle, many a sacrifice, many a temporary defeat. But Victory will come, and the Progress of the Past is a pledge of the Progress of the Future.

We have the witness within us that God is on our side, as we march slowly on to the last great battle-field of Armageddon; and we can sing, in perfect faith and hope, the grand words of the poet:

'Marching down to Armageddon, Brothers brave and strong,
Let us cheer the way we tread on with a soldier's song.
We are they who will not take from Church, or throne, or code,
A lower King for men than God, a meaner goal than Good.
We are they whose constant banner wears no badge nor sign,
But the Light that dyes it white, the Hope that makes it shine.
We are they whose constant watchword is as Christ did teach,—
"Each man for his Brother first, and Heaven then for each."
We are they whose bugle rings that all the wars may cease.

GREETING TO THE EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCHES.

The Rev. CHARLES HARGROVE proposed the following resolution, which, he said, had been before the Conference Committee, and had been accepted by them:—

That this Conference of Christian Churches sends fraternal greetings to the Conference of the Evangelical Free Churches, and heartily wishes them God speed in their endeavours towards the advancement of truth and righteousness, peace, and liberty in this country and throughout the world.

He said he had heard, and read with pain, many comments on the conduct of those who called themselves the Evangelical Free Churches—Nonconformists. In his opinion, if they respected themselves, when they found a door shut in their face they would quietly go away; and similarly, when those churches, whether rightly or wrongly, excluded them and refused their assistance, their feeling ought to be to wish that, without them, they might do the utmost amount of good, and that they might be missed as little as possible (cries of 'No, no,' and 'Yes'). There were two parties amongst their Evangelical brethren—a minority, if not a majority, who would heartily welcome them amongst them; but they were prevented from doing so by the fact that there were others who would not associate with them under any conditions. He thought that those who sympathised with them were in the right; but to enforce their views would break up their union. They, however, hoped one day to welcome them, and would continue to make their union as comprehensive as under the circumstances they could

make it. For the Liberals amongst those churches they had the profoundest sympathy. At the same time, they had no right to find fault with them that they did not welcome them, or to assist in that which pertained to religion. To their friends it was the most sacred of their creed—it was, in fact, the whole of their religion 'that God became man, and by His death redeemed us from the power of the Devil.' They did not agree with that; but it was very dear to the orthodox friends, and he did not know how they could be asked to join with them in meetings which were not simply political or social, and which were distinctly religious. Their friends could not join in the prayers which they, as Unitarians, offered without reservation, or without adding words which they were obliged to omit; so for their good brethren he did plead the utmost charity in judging them (hear, hear), and that they should remember the difficulty in which both parties were placed—those who would join with them and those who would not—on the ground of sincere convictions in which they did not share. But, although thus excluded from their union, they were engaged in the same work, and they had the same sympathies.

The Rev. H. W. PERRIS, of Hull, seconded the resolution. The churches which were known as evangelical churches, he said, had been receiving their advances with greater and greater cordiality for the last twenty years. The mere circumstance that, amid the very great confusion of the present turbulent times, they should not see their way to face a greater outburst than they had ever encountered before by taking the Unitarian body to their arms, did not disprove the fact that in the breasts of the real leaders of the Free Churches there was a very wide community of sentiment with them, and a very large sympathy with their views (a voice: 'Price Hughes'). Suppose they took that most widely-circulated organ of the Evangelical Free Churches, the *Christian World*, was it possible to read the articles, or even take in the scope of the intelligence given, without thinking that the agreements with them vastly outweighed the former differences?

The resolution was carried unanimously.

MR. STEINTHAL'S RESOLUTION.

The SECRETARY announced that the notice of resolution given by the Rev. S. A. STEINTHAL had been slightly altered, by the addition of several words, and would now read as follows:—'That the Council of the Triennial Conference, having been constituted on a basis by which it represents the various congregations and associations which form the Conference, it is hereby resolved that the Committee be instructed to hold regular meetings to consult and, when considered advisable, to take action in matters affecting the wellbeing and interests of the Congregations and Societies which form the Conference by directing attention, suggesting plans, organising expressions of opinion or summoning, if they deem it needful, a special meeting of the Conference. Further, that the Committee shall present to each Conference, a full report of its proceedings and the action it has taken for the approval or otherwise of the Conference.'

The Rev. S. A. STEINTHAL, in moving his resolution, referred to the immense advantages which had accrued from the Union of the churches who were joined together in that Conference. While recognising this,

he said they had felt that there was something lacking still to give a full expression to their spiritual power. They were rejoiced that already good fruit had been gathered from their meeting, fruit such as was the Sustentation Fund organised at Liverpool. With few exceptions now-a-days they could see all over the country assemblies like that time-honoured representative assembly, the Provincial Assembly of Lancashire and Cheshire, where representative meetings were held and expression could be given to the deepest wants of the churches, and their desire and influence upon the world. They had further felt that no church could be alive which did not try to influence the world around. He had been told that his resolution was unnecessary, because they had in the British and Foreign Unitarian Association all that they wanted or desired. He, however, doubted the accuracy of that statement. The British and Foreign Unitarian Association did not represent their churches, and by will could not do so. It represented those individuals who like himself were deeply interested in Unitarian theology. But in that Conference they stood on broader grounds. They represented the churches and, therefore, their committee was the right committee to take this stand.

Mr. JOHN DENDY, of Manchester, seconded the resolution. This would be, he thought, one more step in the organisation which they felt to be so much the want of their churches. That organisation must be founded on two principles. It must respect the liberty and the individuality of the organised congregations, but must also be founded upon that same freedom. He submitted there was not at present in existence any body whatsoever, further than that Conference, to whom it would be advisable to delegate that power which was solidly founded on that principle of freedom. No body should be given power to stand as representative of those churches unless it was truly representative of them all.

Mr. S. B. WORTHINGTON said that this resolution seemed to him to be part of the original scheme not adopted by the General Assembly. It was the first step towards an organisation which would be of a much more extended character than for the moment would appear on the face of it. When the question of a general assembly was proposed that was part of the resolution which was not carried. It was no doubt taking a further step towards that organisation which many of their churches were doubtless anxious to obtain, but there were also others who were not desirous of submitting to it.

The Rev. W. G. TARRANT said he stood before the Conference as a delegate of a congregation. That congregation had not given him any power to vote on this matter, and he thought it would be a very serious step for him to take without consulting them. He thought they ought to postpone any decision on such an important point until the congregations had had an opportunity of discussing it. As an argument against taking serious steps in a hurry, he must point out that they had just passed a resolution unanimously in which that Conference was defined as a Conference of Christian Churches. He had no objection personally to its being so defined, but he knew some who had attended who would say they could not belong to it if that one title was to be taken out of the six which properly described it, and was to be put at the

head. Surely there was no hurry in this matter. They were now treading on dangerous ground. They were at the tail end of the Conference, and many delegates had left: they represented congregations vitally interested in this matter, and he urged them to postpone the matter until they had had an opportunity of more fully considering it.

The Rev. W. MELLOR (York) said the remarks of Mr. Worthington and Mr. Tarrant had made it necessary, so far as any personal convictions were concerned, to say a few words in favour of the adoption, and, if possible, the unanimous adoption of the resolution. The reason why some of their friends seemed to hesitate about it, or to be distinctly opposed to it, was the fear lest, in some way or other, it would interfere with the liberty of their individual congregations; and the fear he himself under ordinary circumstances would fully share. Still he ventured to hope the meeting would pass the resolution unanimously.

Mr. A. W. WORTHINGTON moved the adjournment of the question to the next Conference; not because there might be any serious difficulty arising from its being passed, but such a question required accurate discussion. Had the resolution stood in the words in which it had been printed, he should not have felt quite in order in moving such an amendment, but the resolution had been altered, and words inserted which he had heard for the first time that afternoon, and which no one had had an opportunity of considering. He thought it would be much better if an opportunity was given for the whole of the churches comprised in their Conference deliberately and thoughtfully to consider the matter. Indeed, he was not at all sure that the resolution proposed to give any power to the committee which they did not already possess. If, after consideration they came to the conclusion that this is the work of supererogation they could pass it with a good conscience. If, on the other hand, after investigation they came to the conclusion they were giving more power to the committee than it ought to possess, they would not pass it at all. He moved that the resolution be referred to the committee, with instructions to consider and report on it, and either submit it to a Conference called for the purpose or to the next triennial meeting.

The Rev. C. HARGROVE seconded.

The Rev. E. W. LUMMIS suggested the middle course now open to them, of taking a vote by means of voting papers.

Mr. STEINTHAL said that this question had already been before the Committee on more than one occasion, and had been carefully considered. The Committee placed his notice on the agenda paper, and, in substance, it had been before the congregations (cries of No, no). Well, it was printed and published in the programme of the Conference. He did not see the necessity of further delay. Unfortunately, some of them were getting older, and he for one would like to see an active body established amongst them, to which they could look forward to carry on the work in which they were interested efficiently and well.

The CHAIRMAN said that he was obliged to say that the Conference Committee, while receiving Mr. Steintal's resolution and placing it on the agenda paper, in no way sanctioned it.

Mr. STEINTHAL remarked that at one meeting of the Committee at which he was present he introduced this subject, and was instructed by a unanimous vote to put it to

the Conference. He was, however, surprised to learn that at a subsequent meeting, during the time he was on a sick bed, the resolution had again been brought forward and rejected.

A vote was then taken and the amendment declared to be carried.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS.

On the motion of the PRESIDENT, seconded by Mr. RUSSELL SCOTT, it was resolved that Mr. W. Blake Odgers, Q.C., be President of the next Conference; and on the motion of the Rev. E. I. FRIPP, seconded by the Rev. J. E. MANNING, Mr. J. R. Beard was elected Vice-President. On the motion of Mr. BOWRING, Mr. Howard C. Clark was appointed treasurer; and the Revs. J. Ellis, F. W. Stanley, Mr. C. Fenton, and Mr. A. W. Worthington, hon. secs. The following were chosen the committee, Mr. H. Bramley, Sheffield; Mr. C. Conway, Ringwood; Rev. H. E. Dowson, B.A., Gee Cross; Rev. C. Hargrove, Leeds; Dr. Brooke Herford, Hampstead; Rev. L. P. Jacks, M.A., Birmingham; Mr. D. Martineau, London; Mr. J. S. Mathers, Leeds; Rev. S. A. Steinthal, Manchester; Rev. W. G. Tarrant, B.A., Wandsworth; Rev. P. H. Wicksteed, M.A., Henley; and the Rev. Joseph Wood, Birmingham.

VOTES OF THANKS.

The Rev. C. HARGROVE said he had pleasure in moving a vote of 'thanks to the committee of the conference at Sheffield for their excellent arrangements for the Conference (applause), and magnificent hospitality' (renewed applause). He admitted that votes of thanks were not always sincere, but assured them that he could speak with the utmost sincerity of the wonderful arrangements which had been made in Sheffield (applause). The way in which everything had gone off without hitch or flaw, the way in which great crowds had been managed, had shown a wonderful amount of patience and thought and work up to the last (applause). As for the hospitality he could not speak for each person there, but he believed the general feeling was that Sheffield had received them right royally (applause).

Mr. H. BLESSLEY, in seconding, said he had attended all the Conferences they had held, and in hospitality Sheffield had beaten all the other towns they had visited (hear, hear, and applause).

Mr. HUGH STANNUS supported the motion as an old inhabitant of Sheffield. It had been, he said, a great pleasure to him to see so many of the old faces still among them, and the children of others who had gone. He bore testimony to the hospitality they had received, and to the Christian forbearance their hosts had shown to them. The kindnesses they had received would dwell in the minds of all of them (applause).

The CHAIRMAN asked to be allowed to include in the motion some reference to the many kind friends of Unitarianism who had shown them personal kindness and real sympathy during their stay in Sheffield. The Conference concurred, and in its amended form the resolution of thanks was carried with acclamation.

The hymn, 'Lord! dismiss us with Thy blessing,' was then sung, the benediction was pronounced, and the Conference concluded.

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that doctrine was in danger of being ignored or denied. Finally, he suggested that, in this situation, it might be well for our churches to go back to some point already left behind, whence they could make fresh progress along some different path from that along which Dr. Martineau has led so many of us.

In the February number of the Magazine, Mr. Wood wrote to a very similar effect, generally confirming and expanding Mr. Jacks's position.

In the March number I was permitted by the courtesy of the Editors to have my say. I endeavoured generally to combat Mr. Jacks's apprehensions. I expressed my astonishment at the opinion that Dr. Martineau's theology 'is of a nature which admits of no further development.' I protested against the conception that his philosophy denied, or showed the smallest tendency to deny, any 'element essential to a religious view of the universe,' and I asked to what point in our theological development Mr. Jack would propose to go back in order that we might set ourselves to develop along other lines than those of Dr. Martineau.

But now, in the April number, appears a further contribution to the discussion over the distinguished signature of Mr. Stopford Brooke. Mr. Brooke has never moved much among our churches, or become very intimate with our ministers or people. There is ample reason for this in the special line of his pursuits and the absorption of his literary labours. But we have to remember these things in order to account for the startling advice which he now urges upon us with all the passionate power of his pen. He begins by, apparently, supporting Mr. Jacks and Mr. Wood in treating Dr. Martineau's magnificent religious synthesis as mainly a philosophy of denial, and wanting to know what we are going to deny next. He then tells me that I have evaded the issue, and rebukes me for having passed by, unnoticed, Mr. Jack's suggestion about the doctrine of immortality. I am not going to answer a catechism. Those who know me and hear my preaching know perfectly well my opinions on this transcendent theme. And if I am charged with being too docile a disciple of Dr. Martineau, I may very well take refuge under his incomparable vindication of the immortality of the soul in his 'Study of Religion'—an argument which I believe to be absolutely unanswerable.

But Mr. Brooke's dissatisfaction with me is a small matter, and certainly would not in itself have made me feel it necessary to draw attention to his article in your columns. Mr. Brooke, however, proceeds to press, in the most urgent manner, for a definite creed for our churches, or, at any rate, our ministers, acceptance of which shall be 'incumbent' on us all. Possibly he will say that this is an inaccurate statement of his contention. If so, I am, however, unable to attach any meaning to what he has written. That your readers may judge. I beg you to print in full the following excerpts from his article:—

1. (On Immortality):—Ought we not to have a clear statement of our belief, as a religious body, in this as in other matters which an overwhelming majority of unbelievers as well as believers in God consider essential to a religion which calls itself Theism, to say nothing of Christian Theism?

2. The thought underneath Mr. Jacks's question, though he does not say so, is, it seems to me, this—Ought we not to clearly confess some ideas as absolutely true for us, and which the

world will clearly understand are held by our ministers and the bulk of their congregations. For, until such a general confession is made and understood, we have no bond of union; we are a mere loose congeries of unrelated pebbles, rolling over and over one another on the shore of uncertainty; we have no right to the name of a church, and nothing whatever of its reality; we have no emotion behind us wherewith to move the world to action, such as comes from infinite ideas deeply loved and clearly believed; we shall drift—as we are tending to do at present—into a body of men, loosely and inoperatively connected together, who have no clear ideas on religion held by all, and incumbent on all, and who, therefore, speak with no clear voice to the world around us, who are year by year getting out of touch with humanity, who are losing instead of gaining adherents, who tend more and more to live in the pride of criticism—within a ring fence apart from the world, who have lost passion in religion and joy, who cling desperately to their past when their beliefs were vivid and effectual, but whose present is gloomy and whose future is uncertain. Nor shall we escape this fate unless we make ourselves into a church or a body of men—I care not for the word used—which professes faith in certain fundamental conceptions which it considers of the essence of a religion, which, capable of infinite development, are yet themselves believed and loved as part of eternal truth; which every one in our body is supposed to hold as true, and which, if he ceases to hold as true, he is bound in honour and conscience to declare that he has ceased to believe—and, in consequence, to cease to belong to our communion.

Now, Sir, what is this but the advocacy of the imposition of a creed to be enforced on us all?

We are to have a 'clear statement of our belief as a religious body.' We are to draw up, or somebody is to draw up, 'a general confession.' Certain ideas are to be 'incumbent on all.' We are to be 'bound in honour and conscience . . . to cease to belong to our communion,' if we fail to accord with whatever some unnamed ecclesiastical authority may elect to include as 'essential to a religious view of the universe.'

I repudiate, not without an emotion approaching indignation, the allegations that 'we have no emotion behind us'; that we have no 'infinite ideas deeply loved and clearly believed'; 'that we tend more and more to live in the pride of criticism.' I say that we have preachers amongst us, less gifted, indeed, than Mr. Stopford Brooke, but no whit behind him in the depth and fervour of their belief, the passion of their love of God and man, the eagerness and devotion of their ministry, the clearness and luminosity of their message. But far more momentous is it to sound the alarm at the threatened danger when so illustrious a name as that of Stopford Brooke—which we thought stood before the world for the absolute freedom of the human soul—lends itself to lay on us a yoke which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear.

RICHARD ARMSTRONG.

Liverpool, April 13.

UNITARIANS AND CHRISTIANS.

SIR,—I enclose copy of a letter which I sent to the Conference, and which, together with the postscript enclosing an extract from a letter from Dr. Martineau, I hoped would have been read there; but it arrived too late to be read in what was considered to be its appropriate place in connection with Mr. Addis and Mr. Wood's papers. I shall be glad if you can see your way to print it in your issue next week, when the proceedings of the Conference will appear as a Supple-

ment, as it attempts to deal with the practical question as to how to make our form of Christianity more widely acceptable and efficacious.

W. RATHBONE.

Green Bank, Liverpool, E., April 10.

[COPY.]

March 31.

DEAR SIR,—In writing on March the 2nd, I said that I would give my reasons later why I could not see my way to attend the Conference, and take the part you kindly offered, of opening, in a speech which should be limited to about ten minutes, the discussion on the papers to be read by the Rev. Joseph Wood and the Rev. W. E. Addis, on 'The Deepening of the Spiritual Life of our Churches.' That is a subject which will, no doubt, be most powerfully dealt with in the papers to be read, and on which it would be presumption on my part to suppose I could add anything of value.

But a subject which at this time also presses for consideration is the maintenance of our faith among ourselves and its spread to others, and what bears on this, and is specially interesting Unitarians now, is whether we really are a body of Christians, or whether our Christianity is only an incident of our faith, and not its very cornerstone. This is quite independent of recent events, to which I have no wish to allude; the more we avoid blame or criticism the better.

My experience—in an active life among men—has led me to form very decided opinions of what is necessary in any religious belief that is to prevail and meet the wants of the busy, striving, hard-worked mass of the community, rich and poor, cultivated and ignorant; and especially of the classes who first received and spread the Christian religion.

For our faith to prevail, it is not philosophy that is required, but personal, insistent belief in our Master and Teacher, Jesus Christ; and gratitude and affection for Him as the Man sent by God into this world as His revelation of His intention for man, and of what is possible to man if he is willing to open his soul to, and guide his life by, the immediate leading of God's Spirit, which is always waiting to thus guide, strengthen, inspire and comfort. In my long and varied experience I have found gratitude and affection towards Christ, for His life and death, the most powerful motive with those who have done most to inspire religious work, and most for the reclamation of the erring.

It is not possible for most busy men really to grasp the teachings of philosophy, or understand the unseen God and Father without the manifestation He has given us in the Christ whom He sent to reveal Himself, and His character and design. Most of us require a leader and teacher whose life and death comes home to our human nature, and to whom we are bound by personal gratitude and affection; and humanity, if it does not take Christ for its leader, will have some other. The busier the world becomes, the more is the necessity of leadership felt, and if men do not take a higher leader, they will descend to even a Parnell rather than have no leader at all.

We want to emphasise as our leader the One who could say truly:—'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.'

A system of philosophy and of abstract ideas is not sufficient to help us in our hurried, anxious, often suffering and sorrowing

always difficult, struggle of life. We need also to bring home to the individual soul and convince it of the indwelling of God Himself in our human heart, whenever we are willing, as Christ always was, to listen to and obey the leadings of God's Spirit.

It is not as a religious teacher that I can speak; but because it seems to me from observation and experience among men that such teaching is necessary, if our religious belief is to be understood and made effectual with our common working humanity.

I attempted to advocate these views at the Conference six years ago; and after taking the best advice I could from old friends and counsellors, I decided that it would be hopeless to argue them if intruded among other topics. I could do it more concisely in writing than in a general discussion.

I shall be very glad if it should prove, as you think, that the programme may give an opening for the clear assertion of the distinctive Christian character of our faith; but I felt it would require more power and eloquence than I possess to hope to do this under the programme.

What I have tried to say, I have learnt from Dr. Channing, Dr. Martineau, and Mr. Thom. I feel bitterly how defective this letter is. If we could have had a few words from 'the great leader still among us, we, his followers, would not need to raise protest or warning.

Yours faithfully,
WM. RATHBONE.

P.S.—Dr. Martineau has kindly complied with my request that I might quote the following extract of his reply to a letter of mine with copy of this letter:—'I am convinced that your letter will be more likely to leave a persuasive impression than any address that could provoke a debate. I perceive signs of great difference of opinion on the question raised by Mr. Voysey, and expect no good from its discussion in our present state of mind.

'As for our rightful claim to the Christian name, I am entirely at one with you. Not only are we the actual Unitarians of to-day—Christians also,—but, except as a section of the Christian Church, Unitarianism itself has no existence and its name no meaning; the very word itself connoting a doctrine respecting the person of Christ as an acknowledged Revealer. No one can profess Unitarianism, while disowning Christianity, without contradiction of terms. He may, indeed, cherish a belief in one God, before the Christian era or beyond the Christian range. But that makes him a Monotheist, be it Jew, Mohammedan, or Buddhist, the Unity being affirmed of the Godhead in mere Dramatic Entirety; not a Unitarian, who personalises, and, therefore, unifies, the attributes which the orthodox creed breaks into a threefold distribution.

'On the question, "Which shall be the watchword of our fellowship, 'Unitarian or Christian'?" I am amazed that any doubt can be felt. Under conditions of equal personal qualifications, shall the passport into our Ministry be simply Monotheistic faith, be it of Rabbi, Turk, or Mandi, or of Christian discipleship to the Prophet of the Beatitudes, the Sufferer of Gethsemane, the Martyr of the Cross, and the Revealer to our hearts of the beauty of holiness and the sanctity of life?

'I do not feel a moment's alienation from those of different sympathetic choice. But

for my own part, I cannot dispense with the consecration of that unique presence for ever re-awakening the blended love of man and God. The documents that tell of him are, I must admit, mixed and imperfect, and need sifting before we can reach their true historical original. But the genuine essence of that life, when found and appreciated, is still so far beyond our present standards as to shame our past indifference and to quicken our sense of the high calling before us. With this feeling ever stronger in me, I must still seek my supporting fellowship with those who frequent the Christian sanctuary.'

OBITUARY.

THE REV. W. MITCHELL.

As briefly recorded last week, the Rev. W. Mitchell passed away, after a very long and painful illness, on Saturday, April 3. Born at Halifax on the 5th of May, 1829, he was within a few weeks of his 68th birthday. Less than a fortnight before his death he wrote to us one of his characteristic letters, interesting in its details of local and personal news, touching in its simple piety. The closing words of one who has so often written for our pages now have a special significance. He wrote:—'I can assure you that your sympathy comes with power, sweetening my lot; for a friend's heart is but the channel of God's love, and so is twice blessed,—blessed once as the expression of what is divine in the human heart, and then as the overflowing of the affection of the Great Heart of the Universe. God bless you, now and ever, is the prayer of one who is made strong by a friend's sympathy.'

Better than any formal story of his life and work is the following sketch by one who knew him all through his busy career, and who had special ties towards him.

THE REV. W. BINNS'S TESTIMONY.

I knew William Mitchell more than 45 years ago. At that time he lived at Pudsey, in Yorkshire. I used to preach occasionally at Pudsey, as a lay preacher, in connection with the West Riding Mission. We had a small number of earnest and hard-headed people, who met in a room which would hold over a hundred persons. William Mitchell sometimes worshipped with the rest. But he could not exactly be called a Unitarian, hardly even a Christian of any sort, then. As far as I remember, he did not care for the name. He was a kind of Deistical believer in God and a hoper for Immortality. But his chief interests were political, and he often startled the respectable Liberals of Leeds and Bradford and the neighbourhood by stating in plain language the doctrines which they wrapped up in beautiful vagueness. The best designation for him would be Republican. He published and edited an advanced little paper called the *Yorkshire Tribune*. It often had very spicy articles, but he lost money by it. Latterly, I mean some forty years ago, his political opinions remained much the same, but he did not mix up so much as formerly in public demonstrations. This was because he was beginning to take a more lively interest in religious matters. He was an independent thinker and a good speaker. When roused he was downright eloquent and fiery. I well remember his saying to me, and I agreed with him, that the Unitarian Home Missionary Board, as it was then called, was the proper place for him to go to and prepare himself for the regular work of the ministry. This

he did about the time that I left, early in 1858. Dr. Beard and Mr. Gaskell found him a rough diamond. But they were both men gifted with a clear insight into character, and they soon discovered the genuineness of the diamond. After he left Manchester he became minister at many different places. I remember Hinckley, Leicester Free Christian Church, St. Mungo (Glasgow), Accrington, and Longsight. I believe it was at Longsight that he finally broke down, and for the last 15 years or more his life has been a martyrdom. He might say, 'I die daily.' His patience, and even cheerfulness, in perpetual suffering was wonderful, almost superhuman and miraculous. People who saw him and talked with him, went away strengthened by his heroism. The more he suffered, the more there grew upon him a devout sense of the fatherly love of God, and a confident looking forward to a future life. He sympathised with Christ. Like Christ he commended his tried and tortured spirit into his Father's hands. Mr. Forrest often saw him after his own settlement at Sale, and Mr. Steinthal and other Manchester ministers were old and valued friends. The Unitarian body knew him better by his writing than by his preaching. In preaching he had a strong Yorkshire accent and was a very plain speaker, and some people did not like these peculiarities. But his writing took captive many of those who were put out or rubbed the wrong way by his preaching. He contributed largely to THE INQUIRER, and only a short time before his death he exchanged kindly letters with Mr. Marshall, the former editor of THE INQUIRER. The pages of the *Truth-Seeker* and the *Coming Day* were also enriched by him. He wrote most during the long agony of his years of dying. He found a strange comfort in it. His articles were deep, vigorous, original, and suggestive. The marvel is that they were ever written. Other men, with far less suffering, would have given way to querulousness, and wasted the little strength they had in vain complaints against Providence. He remained an indomitable and patient toiler to the last. Now he rests from his earthly labours, and his works do follow him. I stood by his grave side on the Wednesday afternoon of the Triennial Conference. The service was conducted by Mr. Forrest and Mr. Steinthal. Mr. Steinthal's touching address was a beautiful tribute to the character of him to whom we were bidding a temporary farewell. Seldom have the clouds fallen on the body of so sterling a man. Now the man himself has gone home to God. For many years his wife affectionately nursed him, and wheeled him about. God pity her in her bereavement!

EPPS'S COCOA.—GRATEFUL AND COMFORTING—'By a thorough knowledge of the natural laws which govern the operations of digestion and nutrition, and by a careful application of the fine properties of well-selected COCOA, Mr. Epps has provided for our breakfast and supper a delicately flavoured beverage which may save us many heavy doctors' bills. It is by the judicious use of such articles of diet that a constitution may be gradually built up until strong enough to resist every tendency to disease. We may escape many a fatal shaft by keeping ourselves well fortified with pure blood and a properly nourished frame.'—*Civil Service Gazette*.—Made simply with boiling water or milk.—Sold only in packets and pound tins, by Grocers, labelled—'JAMES EPPS & Co., Ltd., Homœopathic Chemists, London.' Also makers of Epps's Cocaine or Cocoa-Nib Extract: A thin beverage of full flavour, now with many beneficially taking the place of tea. Its active principle being a gentle nerve stimulant, supplies the needed energy without unduly exciting the system.

MANCHESTER AND DISTRICT.

[From our Special Correspondent.]

EVEN Unitarianism has 'phenomenal' things to record sometimes, and it is a source of encouragement to others for them to be made known. This general awakening in our churches has, in many places, resulted in an effort to start a new cause, or galvanise an old and decayed one into new life. We have been told truly enough that there are many large centres of population in the country where there is no Unitarian church, though there ought to be; and one reason and another—none of them satisfactory—have been given for this lamentable state of affairs. However, it is one instance with which I wish to deal in this letter. A few miles from Manchester there is situated a very populous centre of industry, yeclapt Ashton. For many years the question has been asked, Why is not some effort made to establish a Unitarian church there? In days gone by, the Missionary Conference was more aggressive than it is to-day, and, in the face of all obstacles, ignored districts and associations, and engaged in missionary enterprise on its own account. When I say that Southport and Blackpool are amongst the successful causes which it started, it will be seen that it was in earnest, and that its effort was no child's play. For years it had its eye on Ashton; but courtesy forbade it taking the initiative, owing to the close proximity of Dukinfield and Stalybridge. It was rumoured that some members of these churches resided at Ashton, and, of course, that meant they might transfer some portion, if not all, of their support. Well, it was human, and many other churches have been actuated by similar fears in their attitude towards new movements; and, in referring to it, I am making no unkind reflection, but am showing the evolution of thought in this connection to-day. The Missionary Conference, at one of its annual meetings, sent a formal message to the East Cheshire Christian Union, offering to co-operate and render all possible help, if it would only open up ground there tentatively. Correspondence passed between the two secretaries, and eventually the Union appointed a sub-committee to investigate; but one member of this committee has personally told me that it never met. Why? Well, I have heard authoritatively that a few wealthy members threatened to withdraw their subscriptions if the movement were started! Since then there have been a few first-class funerals in the district. I have frequently of late years attended the annual meeting of the Union, and Ashton has been invariably mentioned by the Rev. H. E. Dowson and others, and still nothing was done. The Union was poor, and seemed to think itself pledged to bolster up an unprofitable cause in the Potteries rather than try new ground; but my personal experience is that the initiation of a new cause does not necessarily entail a pecuniary loss, especially in a township having a population of 40,000. Well, now, this is all the hard language I intend using, and I trust I may be forgiven for thus much plain speaking. A change has slowly come over the scene, and a very handsome effort has at last been made, with such an unexpected measure of success, that, from what I hear, the friends of the East Cheshire Union are in perplexity lest the cause may, so to speak, run away with them. Having made up their minds to test the prospect at Ashton, they determined to do the thing thoroughly, and, certainly, I never knew of a

similar effort having been made with greater generosity and elaboration. A public hall was hired, four services were arranged for, a band was secured to lead the singing, four of the ablest and most eloquent preachers of our body promised to deliver the discourses, and no undertaking could have been more effectively advertised. Moreover, there was to be no collection at the services. What is the result? Well, the hall has been crowded, and many had to be turned away. The attention has been remarkable, and a widespread interest has been created. The last of the series of services was held on Sunday evening, April 4, and was conducted by the Rev. W. Copeland Bowie. So great was the crush that every corner of the building was filled, and even the platform was crowded so that the folk almost pressed upon the preacher. A meeting was held after the service, in order that the feeling might be gauged as to the continuance or otherwise of the services. One hundred persons filled up papers expressing themselves desirous of their continuance; and supposing that a proportion of them are already members of other Unitarian Churches, one can scarcely imagine it will, in the least degree, influence the decision of the Union. Dr. Brooke Herford has set an example which we may advantageously follow. When he was minister at Upper Chapel, Sheffield, he told off, voluntarily, a certain number of his own folk to go and put their best effort and strength with the new cause at Uppertorpe, and he has more recently done the same thing at Hampstead, in connection with the new church at Kilburn. Surely after such remarkable success, securing audiences of 600, and turning other hundreds away, our East Cheshire friends will not allow any lapse whatever in the continuance of these services. Those of us who have engaged in new efforts know how hard it is to get people straight away to hand in their names, and that so many as 100 at Ashton is almost a revelation to us. Moreover, we know that the leakage from other and older churches, on the establishment of new causes, is amazingly exaggerated by the timid ones amongst us; and that what little there is does not mean weakness, but an increase of general strength and fervour. There are some of our cautious friends who say—Is it worth while continuing the Ashton services, seeing that the summer is approaching? This question comes too late; it should have been considered before. The work is begun, and begun gloriously, and—'No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.' Then others say—The Union is poor, and how can expenses be met? Surely no one who knows the missionary spirit of the British and Foreign in these latter days, could doubt for a single moment that it would readily and generously subsidise an effort like this. Besides, here is a fact which clinches the whole question, and, one would think, settles it definitely:—An Ashton man got up in the meeting and said that Ashton folk didn't want everything given to them; that they would be quite willing to contribute to an offertory; and, further, that if they would straightway continue the series with four more services, he himself would pay out of his own pocket the difference, if any, between the amount of offertory and the actual cost! Were ever auspices more favourable than those at Ashton? Did ever an Association have a grander opportunity than that which the East Cheshire Union now has? I am glad to

record that the counsels of the brave have prevailed, that the hall has been secured for four more services, and that the Rev. Charles Hargrove was there last Sunday evening. The neighbouring ministers at Dukinfield and Stalybridge are advocating and encouraging this effort whole-heartedly, knowing that even at the expense of transferring a few of their own members who live in Ashton (though this does not necessarily follow), a strong and successful cause in an adjoining township of such a population and importance, would give strength and impetus not only to themselves, but to Unitarians right through the country. May complete success attend the efforts of our East Cheshire friends; and may this splendid beginning be so earnestly fostered as that it shall culminate in the foundation of an enthusiastic and even self-supporting church.

FIDELIS.

LONDON DISTRICT UNITARIAN SOCIETY.

THE annual meeting of this Society was held at Essex Hall on Monday evening being preceded by a social hour-and-a-half. There was a good attendance. We regret that we are obliged greatly to abbreviate our report. The chair was taken by Mr. J. F. SCHWANN, President of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association. Letters were read apologising for absence, among them one from Mr. P. W. Clayden, who expressed the hope that the meeting would 'follow the example of the National Conference at Sheffield, and pass a resolution of sympathy with the Christians of the Turkish Empire, and of strong protest against the employment of British ships and sailors and soldiers in repressing their heroic efforts to free themselves from the horrible oppression under which they suffer.' Mr. H. CLENNELL (joint-hon. sec.) then read the Annual Report.

The report said there was good work going on at Woolwich, and a new church, it was hoped, would be soon established there. At Kilburn the church was progressing very well indeed. The Kentish Town (Clarence-road) congregation had prospered so much as to be able to devote a large sum to the Society's funds in reduction of the aid granted to it. Other stations showed hopeful signs, with the exception of Stepney, which had been the subject of great anxiety. At Lewisham a new effort had been begun with a very promising outlook, and a minister had been stationed there. Reference was made to the appeal for raising £1000, which had not yet been wholly successful, although signed by the president and other prominent friends of the cause. The report closed with a reference to the great spiritual needs of London, and a hope that the society might go on to minister to those needs with increased success.

Mr. DAVID MARTINEAU, hon. treasurer, made his financial statement. The income of the past year had been £984 as against £929 in 1895; this sum included £264 subscriptions, £88 19s. collections, and £280 grants from the British and Foreign Unitarian Association. The expenditure had been £1106, and despite every desire to economise they had changed a small balance in hand to a deficit of £122 at the end of the year.

The CHAIRMAN, in moving the adoption of the reports, said they must remember that several special appeals had been before their friends lately in addition to that of the Society, and these have been generously responded to. He hoped the £1000 would soon be raised. No doubt the Society was

doing excellent work, especially in fostering churches amongst the suburbs whither the population tended continually. It was gratifying to see the work carried on with so much energy.

Mr. S. S. TAYLER, in seconding, pointed out that congregations that were helped to become self-supporting soon grew able to help others. He would remind the younger friends that that Society had been instrumental in the founding of the churches at Croydon, Wandsworth, Peckham, Kensington, Quex Road, Highgate, Stratford, Forest Gate, Bermondsey, and Richmond, besides helping older congregations like Stamford Street. He referred to the great Conference just held at Sheffield, and trusted some of the enthusiasm kindled there would be manifested in London. It was a miserable thing that they had not raised the £1000 appealed for, considering the great work they had to do.—The motion was carried.

Mr. D. MARTINEAU, in moving the election of the President and vice-Presidents, said in the report the Committee had expressed the opinion that it would be well to enlist wider interest in the Society by changes of President at short intervals. Sir James Clarke Lawrence, their President for so many years, was of the same opinion, but they felt it would be ungracious to act on that suggestion instantly, in view of the years of useful and enthusiastic service rendered by Sir James. He proposed his name, therefore, with great heartiness, as President for the ensuing year.

Mr. W. BLAKE ODGERS seconded, and the motion was carried.

Dr. BROOKE HERFORD moved a resolution commending the work of the Society, and expressing a desire that it should promote as far as possible social intercourse among the Unitarians of London. He said it was remarkable how much good work had been done with so little means. As regards the promotion of social meetings he thought them of great value,—they wanted to know each other better throughout the congregations. He proceeded to take encouragement from the marked way in which the Conference at Sheffield had enlisted the attention of the local journals, and from signs of religious broadening indicated in 'Ian Maclaren's' creed. He said, however, the hints that Dr. Watson was to be treated as a heretic showed that their work in the liberation of Christian thought was far from done.

The Rev. W. CHYNOWETH POPE, of Lewisham, seconded the motion, and gave some interesting particulars of the outlook in his district.

The Rev. G. BOROS (Hungarian) also addressed the meeting, and the motion was then carried.

On the motion of Mr. HUGH STANNUS, the officers were elected as follows:—Mr. D. Martineau, treasurer; Mr. G. Callow and Mr. W. Tate, representatives on the Council British and Foreign Unitarian Association; Mr. H. Baily and Mr. G. H. Clennell, secretaries; and Mr. F. Withall and Mr. R. Lawford, auditors. The committee was balloted for, there being 23 nominations for 18 places. The names elected were Messrs. G. L. Bristow, George Callow, E. Chatfield Clarke, J. Cooper, H. Epps, I. S. Lister, A. Martinelli, W. J. Noel, W. Blake Odgers, Frank Preston, Russell Scott, J. Sudbery, Rev. W. G. Tarrant, Messrs. W. Tate, S. S. Tayler, A. Titford, Rev. S. F. Williams, Mr. Howard Young.

On the motion of Mr. W. BLAKE ODGERS,

seconded by Mr. G. CALLOW, Mr. Howard Young was elected representative of the Society to the National Conference Committee. Some doubt was expressed as to the right to elect a representative.

A vote of thanks to the Chairman concluded the meeting.

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES.

[Notices and Reports for this Department should be as brief as possible, and be sent in by Tuesday Morning.]

Bradford.—On Wednesday evening March 31, a congregational meeting was held in connection with Chapel Lane Chapel, for the purpose of considering a scheme for the rebuilding of the school-room, which has become inadequate for carrying on the work of the Sunday-school and its associated institutions. There was a large attendance, and much enthusiasm was manifested. Mr. C. H. Ellis, who presided, stated that although it was only a few days since an appeal had been sent to members and friends of the congregation, promises of subscriptions had been received amounting to £500, and that the sum of £340, the proceeds of a bazaar, etc., was deposited in the bank. Mr. Byron Boothroyd was appointed treasurer of the building fund, the secretaries being Mr. John Ellis, solicitor, Bradford, and Mr. Allan P. Hewitt.

Bedfield.—Miss F. Hill (Hon. Secretary of the Central Postal Mission and Unitarian Women's Union) has been on a visit, and assisting in the work in this village. During her stay, the senior girls of the Sunday-school were organised into a band (the 'Daffodil' Band) for 'work and worship.' They meet weekly at the residence of their teacher (Miss E. M. Smith), and are taught sewing, etc. Two lantern services have been held recently—one last Sunday—the subjects being the Parables of the Prodigal Son, the Good Samaritan, and the Talents.

Bolton: Unity Church.—The school anniversary services were held on Sunday, April 4, when, in the afternoon and evening, the Rev. L. De Beaumont Klein, D.Sc., F.L.S., of Liverpool, preached to large congregations. Mr. F. Taylor, J.P., delivered an address to the children in the morning, the service also being very well attended. Special musical services by the choir, under the direction of Mr. Lancaster, were given. The collections were appreciably larger than last year. The number of scholars on December 31 on the register was 269, with an average attendance of 216. The annual welcome and re-union of old and new members of the congregation was held on Wednesday evening, March 24, when 34 new members were welcomed and added to the register of the church a spirited address being given by Mr. D. Whitehead. The minister (Rev. H. M. Livens) and the chairman of the church (Mr. Jos. Entwistle) also gave them a hearty welcome. The membership roll is now 211. In the unavoidable absence of the Rev. C. J. Street, M.A., LL.B., minister of Bank-street, we had a good substitute in the person of his father (the Rev. J. C. Street, of Birmingham), who gave a stirring address. With a quartette party and Miss Hargreave's solos a most pleasant and harmonious evening was spent.

Cheltenham.—The second year of the Bayshill Literary and Social Union was brought to a close on Wednesday week with a conversazione. The schoolroom, which was tastefully draped, was well filled. Conversation and games were indulged in and an excellent musical programme was provided, while refreshments were served during the course of the evening. The visitors included the Rev. Walter Lloyd and Mrs. Lloyd, of Gloucester; the Rev. H. Austin, Cirencester; and a large number of friends connected with other churches in the town. On the motion of the President (Rev. G. W. Lewin), seconded by the Rev. H. Austin, a hearty vote of thanks was accorded those who had helped to make the meeting of the society a success, special mention being made of Miss Annie Fisher (secretary), Mr. Gunning (treasurer), and Mrs. Bailey. Interesting and well attended meetings have been held during the session, including a number of entertainments and the following lectures:—'Sixty Years Ago,' Rev. Walter Lloyd; 'Socialism,' Mr. Allpass; 'Samuel Pepys,' Rev. G. W. Lewin; 'Tom Hood,' Mr. H. Branch (*Cheltenham Examiner*); 'The Crazy Priest of Kent,' Mrs. Parsons (*Gloucestershire Echo*); 'Whittier,' Mr. Harle.

Edinburgh: St. Mark's Chapel.—Preaching last Sunday on the present Eastern crisis, the Rev. R. B. Drummond, after quoting the resolution adopted by the Sheffield Conference, said that having been so unfortunate as to be unable to put his name to the recent memorial to Lord Salisbury

so numerous signed by his brethren in the Unitarian ministry, in which it was insinuated, as it humbly seemed to him, very unjustly, that the Prime Minister was propping up Turkish tyranny, he was glad to find he could cordially assent to that resolution. The second clause, indeed, might give rise to some difference of opinion, but for his own part he was quite ready to protest, however vainly—he feared it would be in vain—against forcing on the Cretans any form of government they do not themselves desire. He went even farther. He did not doubt that annexation to Greece was by far the most natural and fitting solution of the problem. But if the Powers, for whatever reason, will not consent to this, would it not be far wiser of the Cretans to accept the autonomy offered to them rather than by refusing it, as they did before, by the advice of Greek revolutionaries from the Continent, run the risk of again coming under the despotism of the Turk?

Framlingham.—A lantern service was held in the Old Meeting House, on Sunday, the 4th inst. Mr. Goldstein (Ashfield) kindly provided the lantern and all necessary, excepting slides, and acted as lanternist. The town has been excited over the election for Parish Council, the minister being a candidate, and successful both at the public meeting on March 18, and at the poll on the 7th inst. The rector expressed his thanks to Mr. Amey for a letter written to a local paper, on the matter that formed the test question of the election, and a friend, whose opinion and approval are highly valued, writes:—'I congratulate you on your re-election, and, still more so, on the straightforward stand you took.' Mr. G. F. Bromhead has been assisting the minister in the services at Framlingham and Bedfield. Among the successful candidates at the Cambridge local examination, was the minister's eldest son, who is under training at the Albert Memorial College (Framlingham), on a scholarship from the East Suffolk County Council.

London: Blackfriars Mission.—At the recent annual meeting the following ladies and gentlemen were elected as officers for the ensuing year:—Treasurer, Mr. C. F. Pearson; Secretary, Mr. Percy Preston; Committee, Mrs. Mace, Miss Martineau, Mrs. A. B. Midlane, Rev. W. Copeland Bowie, Rev. James Harwood, Messrs. A. H. Biggs, R. I. Gregg, I. S. Lister, S. S. Tayler; Auditors, Messrs. J. T. Preston and N. M. Tayler. The committee's report contains the following passage in regard to the scheme of amalgamation and extension sanctioned then:—'It is felt that the transference to Stamford-street with a new committee consisting of members of the Mission and of Stamford-street Chapel will be for the benefit of both institutions. One class of young women has already been transferred and holds its meetings in the larger place; another has applied to be allowed to move, while the Sunday-school would undoubtedly benefit by the change. It is hoped that all the friends who have hitherto provided the funds for carrying on the work of the Mission will transfer their subscriptions so that the treasurer and committee may have a good list with which to start the new venture. The present premises will, of course, be kept on for some time longer, as, even if the contemplated arrangements are concluded for the purchase of some adjoining property, it will be some months before the premises can be adapted to the requirements of the new work.'

London: Hackney.—It may be mentioned as an instance of wider liberality than that of the Evangelical Free Church Council that on Monday evening April 5, the Rev. S. Fletcher Williams lectured for the third time, in the Rectory-road Congregational Schoolroom, to the congregation of Alderman the Rev. Fleming Williams. The lecture had for its subject 'Thomas Carlyle,' and the schoolroom was filled. For two years the Rev. S. Fletcher Williams has been, and still is, a vice-president of a society connected with this Congregational Church.

London: Kentish Town (Clarence-road).—At the closing meeting of the Social and Literary Institute, the Rev. A. Farquharson in the chair, Lady O'Hagan delivered a most excellent and interesting lecture, entitled 'The Aristocracy of Intellect as contrasted with the Aristocracy of Force and Wealth.' A very hearty vote of thanks was carried unanimously on the motion of Mr. Armytage Bakewell and Mr. Copeland Bowie, to which her ladyship gracefully responded, and the proceedings terminated with a cordial vote of thanks to the chairman.

North Cheshire Unitarian Sunday School Union.—The annual conversazione was held at Denton on Saturday last, and was very successful. About 160 sat down to tea, and the president (Rev. N. Green) presided afterwards, supported by the Rev. H. E. Dowson, B.A., Rev. W. Harrison, M.A. Slater, and others. An excellent vocal and instrumental programme was given by the Denton friends,

the singing class, under the leadership of Mr. W. Woolley, rendering several part songs in a most admirable manner. The Revs. H. E. Dowson and W. Harrison, on behalf of the Union, welcomed the Rev. R. Jenkin Jones, M.A., of the Welsh Unitarian Chapel, Aberdare, and Mr. T. H. Robinson, of the Manchester District Sunday School Association, who both delivered very interesting and instructive addresses on Sunday-school work. A vote of thanks to the Denton friends was accorded, on the motion of the Rev. G. Evans, M.A., seconded by the Rev. W. L. Tucker, M.A. The Rev. L. Scott replied, and moved a vote of thanks to the president; Mr. E. B. Broadrick seconded, and the president's reply brought a very pleasant evening to a close.

Nottage.—It is with sincere regret that we have to record the death, of Mr. Wm. Ash, an old and respected member of the church here.

Nottingham: Christ Church (Resignation).—The Rev. James W. Braithwaite has announced his intention of closing his ministry here at the end of June next. He began his ministry at Christ Church in November 1890.

Ramsgate.—Frank W. Skemp (son of the Rev. T. R. Skemp, late of Douglas, Isle of Man, and now of Ramsgate), was successful in passing the recent London Matriculation examination, standing eleventh in the honours division. Eight of the candidates above him were disqualified by age from taking the third prize, an exhibition of £15 per annum for two years, which consequently fell to him.

Saffron Walden.—At a meeting of the committee of the General Baptist Chapel, held on March 29, it was resolved to send the best thanks of the committee and congregation to Messrs. Rush (Baptist), Hockley (Congregationalist), Turner and Brook (Wesleyan), Haylock (Primitive Methodist), for their valued services on Sundays during the pastor's recent illness.

South Wales: Graig, Trebanos.—On Sunday and Monday, 11th and 12th inst., our half-yearly meetings were held. The officiating ministers were the Revs. T. Arthur Thomas (Pant-y-faid) and L. Williams (Rhyd-gwin). We are pleased to state that the pithy and excellent sermons were highly appreciated by the crowded congregations. The choir, by their able rendering of the hymns, added an effective charm to all the services. The collections towards the chapel debt were very satisfactory.

Stockton-on-Tees.—On Monday, March 8, the Stockton and Middlesbro' teachers had a conference in the vestry, when Miss F. Rose read a paper on 'Our Sunday-school Work.'—On Wednesday, March 10, we had a pleasant social evening, when we were much indebted to musical friends not connected with our church.—On Tuesday, March 16, Mr. D. R. Wright, who has lived in New Zealand many years, gave us a lecture on the North Island, with lime-light views; it was much appreciated.—On March 24, an entertainment was given by the teachers of the Sunday-school, in aid of the Pianoforte Fund.—Sewing meetings are held every fortnight, well attended by ladies of the church, to prepare for the sale of work to be held about October.

Sydney, N.S.W.—The annual meeting of the members of the Hyde Park Unitarian Church, Sydney, was held on the 19th of January, and was well attended. The secretary's report referred to the help received from English friends for the purpose of wiping out the deficit in ordinary accounts, and said that the effort of the minister ought to stimulate local friends to keep the church from again falling back in funds. Since Mr. Walters' return in April last, the morning congregations have been encouraging, while at evening service the church is generally quite full, and more than once during the winter late comers could not even find standing room. The Literary Society has had a very successful year, and has been able to donate £56 19s. 11d. to the church funds, being surplus from week-night lectures, musical evenings, etc. In connection with the church, a little monthly paper, entitled, *The Liberal Faith*, is now published. While this involves some extra expense, it also saves printing of service cards, programmes, annual reports, etc.; and, with a few select advertisements, the publication nearly pays for itself, besides carrying our principles to many persons in various parts of the Colony, and even to Victoria, New Zealand, Tasmania, etc. In the February number, one of the committee gives a 'Glance at our church work,' and says:—'We have had a very prosperous year, thanks to our esteemed pastor. . . . We have genuine pleasure in looking back upon the path we have trod in the old year, and can thank the Giver of all Good for the right good fellowship that exists among us.' Other numbers of *The Liberal Faith* have contained abstracts of discourses by the Rev. George Walters, on 'The Human Catholic Church,' 'Behold the Man,' 'The Sorrows of Satan,' 'Huxley and Agnosticism,' etc.

OUR CALENDAR.

SUNDAY, APRIL 18.

Bermondsey, Fort-road, Upper Grange-road, 11 A.M., Mr. BUILDER; and 7 P.M., Mr. STANNUS.
Brixton, Unitarian Christian Church, Effra-road, 11 A.M., Rev. W. COPELAND BOWIE; and 7 P.M., Rev. S. FARRINGTON.
Croydon, Free Christian Church, Wellesley-rd., West Croydon, 11 A.M. and 7 P.M., Rev. J. PAGE HOPES.
Deptford, Church-street, 11.15 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. A. J. MARCHANT.
Essex Church, The Mall, Notting-hill-gate, 11 A.M. and 7 P.M., Rev. F. K. FREESTON.
Forest Gate, corner of Dunbar-road, Upton-lane, 11 A.M., and 6.30 P.M., Rev. W. HOLMESHAW.
Hackney, New Gravel Pit Church, Chatham-place, 11 A.M. and 7 P.M., Rev. T. E. M. EDWARDS.
Hampstead, Rosslyn-hill Chapel, 11.15 A.M. and 7 P.M., Rev. BROOKE HERFORD, D.D.
Highgate Hill, Unitarian Christian Church, 11 A.M., Rev. R. SPEARS; and 7 P.M., Rev. W. G. MARSDEN.
Islington, Unity Church, Upper-street, 11 A.M. and 7 P.M., Rev. G. ST. CLAIR, of Cardiff.
Kentish Town, Free Christian Church, Clarence-road, 11 A.M., 'The Resurrection of Jesus'; and 7 P.M., 'The Easter Hope,' Rev. A. FARQUHARSON.
Kilburn, Quex-road, 11 A.M. and 7 P.M., Rev. J. E. STRONGE. Evening, 'The Everlasting Life.'
Lewisham, Unitarian Christian Church, High street, 11 A.M. and 7 P.M., Rev. W. CHYNOWETH POPE. Evening, 'An Easter Message.'
Little Portland-street Chapel, near Oxford-circus, 11.15 A.M., and 7 P.M., Rev. H. RAWLINGS, M.A. Evening, 'Ridicule and Reverence.'
Mansford-street Church and Mission, Bethnal Green, 11 A.M. and 7 P.M., Rev. W. G. CADMAN.
Peckham, Avondale-road, 11 A.M., Rev. F. WOOD; and 6.30 P.M., Mr. A. J. CLARKE.
Richmond, Free Church, Ormond-road, 11.15 A.M., Rev. S. FARRINGTON; and 7 P.M., Rev. W. COPELAND BOWIE; 3 P.M., Children's Service.
Stamford-street, Blackfriars-road, 11 A.M., 'A Glimpse of the Future'; and 7 P.M., 'A Plain Man's Philosophy,' Mr. J. EADS HOW.
Stoke Newington, The Green, 11.15 A.M. and 7 P.M., Rev. VERNON HERFORD, B.A.
Wandsworth, Unitarian Christian Church, East-hill, 11 A.M. and 7 P.M., Rev. W. G. TARRANT, B.A.
Wood Green, Unity Hall, 11 A.M. and 7 P.M., Rev. Dr. MUMMERY.
Woolwich, Masonic Hall, Anglesey-road, Plumstead, 11 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. L. JENKINS JONES.

PROVINCIAL.

BATH, Trim-street Chapel, 11 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. F. W. STANLEY.
BEDFORD, Library (side room), 6.30 P.M., Rev. ROWLAND HILL.
BIRMINGHAM, Church of the Messiah, 11 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. L. P. JACKS, M.A.
BLACKPOOL, Banks-street, North Shore, 10.45 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. Wm. BINNS.
BLACKPOOL, Unitarian Lay Church, Masonic Hall, Waterloo-road, South Shore, 6.30 P.M.
BOURNEMOUTH, Unitarian Church, West-hill-road, 11 A.M. and 7 P.M., Rev. C. C. COE.
BRIGHTON, Christ Church (Free Christian), New-road, North-street, 11 A.M. and 7 P.M., Rev. A. HOOD.
BUXTON, Hartington-road Church, 11 A.M. and 7 P.M., Rev. R. COWLEY SMITH.
CANTERBURY, Blackfriars, 11 A.M.
DOVER, Adrian-street, near Market-square, 11 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. S. BURROWS.
EASTBOURNE, Natural History Museum, Lismore-rd., 11 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. J. M. WHITEMAN.
GUILDFORD, Ward-street Church, 11 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. J. A. FALLOWS, M.A.
HULL, Park-street Church, 10.45 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. H. WOODS PERRIS.
LIVERPOOL, Hope-street Church, 11 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. R. A. ARMSTRONG.
LIVERPOOL, Ancient Chapel of Toxteth, 11 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. J. B. LLOYD.
LIVERPOOL, Renshaw-street Chapel, 11 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. Dr. KLEIN. Evening Sermon, 'Spiritual Religion and the Resurrection of the Body.'
MANCHESTER, Sale, 11 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. JAMES FORREST, M.A.
MANCHESTER, Strangeways, 10.30 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. ALEX. C. HENDERSON, M.A., B.D.
MANCHESTER, Upper Brook-street Free Church 10.45 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. C. PRACH.
NEWPORT, I.W., Unitarian Christian Church, High-street, 11 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. W. J. JUEP.
OXFORD, Manchester College, 11.30 A.M., Rev. C. B. UPTON, B.A., B.Sc.

PORTSMOUTH, General Baptist Chapel, St. Thomas-street, 6.45 P.M., Mr. THOMAS BOND.
PORTSMOUTH, High-street Chapel, 11 A.M. and 6.45 P.M., Mr. G. COSENS PRIOR.
RAMSGATE, Assembly Rooms, High-street, 11 A.M. and 7 P.M., Rev. T. R. SKEMP.
READING, Unitarian Free Church, London-road, 11.15 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. D. AMOS.
SCARBOROUGH, Westborough, 10.45 A.M. and 7 P.M., Rev. E. L. H. THOMAS.
SOUTHPORT, Portland-street Church, 11 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. C. H. WELLBELOVED.
TORQUAY, Unity Hall, Lower Union-street, 11 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. PRIESTLEY PRIME.
TUNBRIDGE WELLS, Mechanics' Institute, Dudley-rd., 11 A.M. and 6.30 P.M.
WEYMOUTH, Oddfellows' Hall, Market-street, 11 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. E. C. BENNETT.
YORK, St. Saviourgate Chapel, 11 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. W. E. ATACK.

CAPE TOWN, Free Protestant Unitarian Church Hout-street, 6.30 P.M., Rev. D. P. FAURE.

GOOD FRIDAY.

Brixton, Unitarian Christian Church, Effra-road, 11 A.M., Rev. W. COPELAND BOWIE.
Essex Church, The Mall, Notting-hill-gate, 11 A.M., Rev. T. E. EDWARDS.
Hampstead, Rosslyn-hill Chapel, Service at 11.15 A.M., Rev. BROOKE HERFORD, D.D.—followed by the Communion.
Richmond, Free Church, Ormond-road, 11.15 A.M., Rev. S. FARRINGTON.
Liverpool, Renshaw-street Chapel, 11 A.M., Rev. Dr. KLEIN, 'The Passion of the Son of Man.'

BIRTH.

ROSCOE—On the 10th April, the wife of Philip Roscoe, of a son.

MARRIAGES.

BENNETT—BARRY—On the 14th April, at All Souls' Church, Elmwood Avenue, Belfast, by the Rev. Richard Lyttle, Moneyrea, assisted by the Rev. W. Jenkins Davies, Mountpottinger, John Bennett, M.B., of Hyde, Cheshire, son of Mr. John Bennett, Cremorne, Strandtown, Belfast, to Lizzie, daughter of the late Mr. John Barry, Belfast.

CLAY—PENK—14th inst., by Rev. George Eyre Evans, in Church of the Saviour, Whitechurch, Richard Clay, to Matilda, second daughter of Benj. Penk, whose parents were long connected with the old Presbyterian Chapel, Whitechurch, under the ministry of Rev. Rd. Shawcross.

DEATHS.

GRAINGER—On the 10th inst., at Woolton in Liverpool, in her 70th year, Miss Jane Grainger, the eldest daughter of the late Edward and Jane Grainger, formerly members of the Hackney congregation.

LONG—On the 13th inst., at The Willows, Peel Causeway, Hale, Elizabeth, widow of the late Peter Long, of Chester, aged 90 years.

TOWNSEND—On Sunday morning, April 19th, 1896, at 68, Queen's Gate, London, Mary Alice, only daughter of the late Thomas Ainsworth, of The Floss, Cumberland, and for nineteen years the beloved wife of Thomas Sutton Townsend, of Clifton Manor, Warwickshire.

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April 10th, 1897. Registrar.

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The FIFTY-SECOND ANNUAL MEETING of the above Association will be held at WARRINGTON, on GOOD FRIDAY, APRIL 16th, 1897.

RELIGIOUS SERVICE in Cairo-street Chapel, at 11.0 a.m. Preacher: The Rev. DENDY AGATE, B.A., of Manchester. A Collection will be made in aid of the Funds of the Association.

Dinner at the Cairo-street Schools, at 12 noon and at 12.45 p.m.

BUSINESS MEETING in the Chapel, at 2 p.m. Chairman: Rev. H. S. TAYLER, M.A. (the Retiring President).

Tea at the Schools, at 4 p.m. and 4.45 p.m.

PUBLIC MEETING in Parr Hall, Palmyra-square, at 6 p.m. Chairman: F. MONKS, Esq., J.P. Reader of Paper: Rev. F. K. FREESTON (London). Subject, 'On Teaching Religion.'

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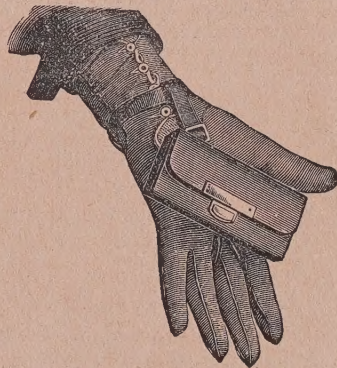
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